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The Lone Trail at Thirty

Francis Gorham



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The Lone Trail at Thirty

Francis Gorham



The Black Lion Publishers

Boston, Mass.

519091

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1909

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MAR 11 1909	
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The Brookline Print, Brookline, Mass.

AN APRIL NIGHT.

There was a roaring in the trees yestreen ;
A wind of March astray shook cold rain down
Upon renascent buds and chilled their hearts
With edge of winter. In the sleeping town
No murmur broke the silence save a bell
Whose solemn voice tolled midnight ; over all
No star to cheer the anxious sight was seen ;
The heavy clouds of storm spread like a pall.
Yet in the darkness, violet and rose
Whispered their secrets to the ear of Night,
And while the worm was busy in the mould
The loveliest things of summer reached toward light.



THE LONE TRAIL AT THIRTY.

Whatever sage or sophist yet may say,
I know of lives whose fruit is in decay
Before the winds of summer stir the bud
To an awakening sense of all Earth's good,
And all their impulses of nobler deeds
Die like a waking rose amid foul weeds.

He is a coward who would lay him down,
Surrendering his self and manhood's crown
To those sole monarchs of the world's weak sense,
Desire of Life, Contempt and Ignorance.

This world, which strews so much of guilt and shame
Before to woo my soul with fleeting fame,
Has little of the songs our fathers heard,
And nothing of the melodies which stirred
The sodden hearts of nations to despise
A purchased balm of peace with honeyed lies.
The fond anticipation of a realm,
Just as God's own, with virtue at the helm,
Which led men to the scaffold and the cross,
Nor were they those who counted it a loss
To render back their dust to common graves,
Wherein their mates were peasants, felons, slaves—
How has it died within the silent Night!
Nor Hope can offer Love its old delight,
Nor yet the star which shone o'er ancient Truth
Emits the bright effulgence of its youth,
But with a borrowed light from other spheres,
Half hints the pathos of funereal tears.

Whate'er it be that brings me to the time
When life was wedded to the soul of rhyme,
And poets sang in every blade of grass
O'er which the western wind might sweetly pass,
When lilies murmured to the scented breeze
A song of passion such as blindly frees
The deepest love which Beauty's heart may know,
Now rarely comes; I since have felt it go,

And feeling, felt that something with it died
Without which Beauty cannot long abide.

I do believe whate'er my soul first met
In its life journey trembles in me yet
And fills me with the sense of what it meant,
Spreading its snares with good or ill intent.
The first hope of the morrow lends a gleam
To him who falters in life's troubled stream:
The first leap of the child may shape its course
O'er ways of glory or byways of remorse;
A glimpse of one may stir a lover's tongue
To singing such as men have rarely sung;
To the pure immortality of fame,
A life unblemished and a spotless name.
But love is dangerous to many men,
And fame is vicious; we who would condemn
Know little of the hell which burns the heart
To ashes ere the tragedy's stern part
Is over, and the cold and silent stars
Rise o'er the world and all its wounds and scars.

My brother, who with Plato feels the thirst,
And counts himself among those who are curst,
What shall he do in this degenerate age?
With draughts of cooling blood quench his fierce rage,
Scatter o'er smiling nations hopeless wreck,
Pleased when grim Ruin hastens at his beck?
With warning thunder drag an empire down
And spurn the monarch and his gilded crown;
Lift to the dizzy eminence the rout
Whose souls are torn with ignorance and doubt;
Whose petty passions reach some given bound,
Then, like a stricken bird, fall to the ground
Than which their souls did never higher climb,
Sleeping or slumberous in their mirthless time?
Or shall he, with the critic's set of rules,
And the dry milk-wash of the favored schools,
Falter through periods of public prayer,
Respected, honored in a council chair;
Mount with his platitudes to competence
And rob his parents in his innocence?
Proud of his heritage, an honored name,
Buy with his plunder Beauty's tender shame;
Erect when Virtue stumbles in the storm,

And bending only to a leman's form,
Pick his safe way o'er comrades' broken lives
And play the lover to his victims' wives?

This is the road to glory; it were crime
To be discovered, else were his life sublime.
And so my brother in his generous mood,
In his vain search for spiritual food,
Stifles his scruples when the doubts begin
With scarlet women and their masques of sin;
Tears childhood from the fane where it should dwell
And strews with flowers its young path to hell;
Sweeps with a word the lover to his doom,
And cheers the maiden in a darkened room;
Bows his meek head when poverty is near,
And drops one burning, sympathizing tear.
The dream of youth, which ends as dreams must end,
Sees the awakened man his judgment bend
And shuffle through his life a stumbling fool,
Bound to his mistress and the golden rule.
How petty is the prize for which men pant!
Their lives precarious and reward is scant.
Perhaps some scheming knave whose sense is fine
Discovers genius in each sounding line,
And while he bids his fond mechanic sing,
Mocks while he smiles, and smiling, kills with sting.

Who is not weary of his stifled life,
And sick to death of all its noise and strife?
Who would not leave ambition for the ways
Of childhood and its June-sweet, thoughtless days?
Were I unconscious of the rose's scent
It would be useless that its life were spent
To soothe with summer all the dreams which sweep
Across my soul in rhythmic swell and deep;
It would be bitter that my feeblest thought,
However weak and worthless, were not fraught
With somewhat of that vague intensity
Which hovers ever in the hopes that free
My soul from fear of final death and loss,
And the sharp pangs of ancient Calvary's cross.
I know not what it is that lifts my hope
Above the mist and darkness; I but grope
With senseless faculties and stricken eyes,
Toward him above, the Man of Sacrifice.

I struggle as the needle toward the pole,
And follow blindly some immortal soul
That crawled o'er sin and torrid waves of hell,
And ever striving, felt its pulses swell
In that unmentionable ecstasy
Which comes to dying dreamers when they see
The long, bleak years of bitter want and pain,
The pangs of Duty and Love's doubtful gain,
Like falling snowflakes in a quiet lake,
Melt as they fall, forever lost each flake,
Resolve themselves into Earth's greatest good
As but a phase of the Eternal Mood.

O gracious God! The primal curse of man
Has wrestled with his substance. In the plan
Of thy recurring seasons and the change
Which comes to life's young manhood, when the range
Of human wisdom sweeps the mists away,
What so implacable as that stern day
When to his eager gaze the guilty earth,
Loud in its turmoil, maddening in its mirth,
Lays bare the impulses which stir the heart
And prompt each halting soul to do its part?

He who has heard the singing of the sea,
Nor doubted that like ocean he was free,
Feeling a kinship with th' eternal stars,
Determined to o'erleap the mortal bars
Which Fate erects when man achieves his soul,
And half unconscious, stumbling toward his goal,
Becomes the builder of his circumstance,
Striving to aid his spirit's first advance.
Like to the child who fears the midnight's gloom,
The silent agony of lampless room,
The dread of something not to flesh akin,
The spectral beings of a sense within,
Vague as the death of summer, felt, not seen,
When hectic red succeeds to Nature's green,
Unknowing of the spur which lifts him o'er
The cowardice of life—all this and more,
Upstands before the tribunal of fate,
More god than man, in conscious truth elate!
Nor turning to the east where suns arise,
Nor westward, where that shining strange world dies,
But as the sparrow, when to home it hastes,

Through lowering storms, o'er floods and barren
wastes,
No guide to point the progress of its way—
A wanderer upon an evil day—
Sure as the star in heaven's cloudless cope,
He poet is, divine, and lord of hope.

So, like the bird which knows no fickle sense
Of failure in its hopeful ignorance,
Yet like the child who fears without a cause
In deference to Nature's nameless laws,
The stern result of anxious years, the plan
Of what his life should be will make the man.
What though the imminent design of death
Should meet him, clutching at the vital breath
Of his existence and its mortal worth?
He lives fore'er who gives his manhood birth.
Death comes to dreamers not in doubtful guise,
But with the light of glowing Fancy's eyes:
A sudden pang, a passing flow of tears,
And the last tribute of eternal years
Beyond the barriers of our design,
Where Science has no certain, solemn sign.

I will go forth among the sons of men,
And standing where the mightier have been,
It may be that the impulse of the age
Will make my heart to feel the godlike rage
Of those who agonize amid the storm;
Of those whose hearts with hope and pity warm,
Are crucified upon the fearful cross
Of public hate. My life were little loss
If none should heed me in the angry press,
And still unterrified by scoff or hiss,
Accept the doom of that immortal one
Who with the hemlock knew his life begun.

The sullen night hath come upon my dream.
From eyes unused doth flow the bitter stream
Of tears; the little strength of purpose left
Hath found me of my courage all bereft,
And in the general wreck of purer hopes,
What is eternal heavenward blindly gropes,
Not nobly, as should such things nobly strain,
But with that weakness which doth urge the vain

Persistence in a fruitless search for good.
Ah God! The creature of a coward mood;
The sport of things of lower spheres than thine
Who matches his weak self against the sign
Of Nature and the Spirit's fairest deeds.
I will take residence among the weeds
Which mock my feeble sense in their disdain.
My being has no brother in its pain.
So let me rest, ere morning o'er the verge
Of this world comes again to fiercely urge
What I should live without one doubting fear
And sing to those who have the poet's ear.

One comes o'er Indian seas in strange array,
And men, unknowing, feel the subtile sway,
The splendid music of his virile voice —
Something within there is bids them rejoice;
But men sow seed where seed cannot take root,
And frost and wind oft kill the fairest fruit;
His words unheeded, fall on careless ears,
And truth is banished to remoter years.

The song which flutters in the robin's breast
To callous men is less than brutal jest,
And flesh is stronger than the vital God,
For men are weak and mobs are of the sod.
I heard the music of a sickened bard,
Whose life, like virtue, was his meek reward.
The noises of the city drowned his song;
He saw Preferment crown the deeds of wrong,
The bestial front of Insolence made clean
By those who knew the strength of things obscene;
The pride of place o'er intellect succeed,
And seeing, felt his poet's great heart bleed.
Nor satisfied that Christ was wholly dead,
Like him of Tarsus, unto Athens sped,
To preach from hilltops to the tribes below
The beauty of that life which few men know.
The hooting multitude came out to curse,
Unmindful of the grandeur of his verse;
The foolish cries of those whose deeds were nought,
Stifled the current of his eager thought;
Old gods, old creeds were nursed in jealous hearts,
And screaming strumpets filled the crowded marts.
The temples, desecrated by the hate

Of factious men, from early morn till late,
Heard his expected doom in sharp debate,
And the Immortals mourned a great man's fate.
The hangman ground his fangs in brutish glee,
And couriers passed from throbbing sea to sea ;
The scent of death was in the very air,
And grief was sick with woe too deep to bear ;
The anguish of unutterable fears
Scorned the vain solace of impotent tears ;
Kings rose in madness, and the People's brain
Staggered beneath the weight of reason's strain ;
Truth and her sister Hope, with shame oppressed,
Fled to remoter climes, and the behest
Of Justice, murdered in its holy trust,
Became the byword of the mob's foul lust.

The heart is silent when it sorrows most :
Love has its passion ere the stream is crossed ;
Love has its silence deep and dull as night,
Yet calm with all the calmness of delight ;
And there are moments in the lives of men
And useless as their long dead years have been.

A daisy lived its life where soft winds pass—
A star amid the waves of rippling grass.
The morning was the minister which fed
Its beauty with the secrets of the dead
Among its kind, and gave its trusting heart
A simple innocence devoid of art.
The warm south brought the scents of Arabie
To cheer its being, o'er a distant sea ;
The lambkin, romping on the summer green,
Grew with the flower in sympathy serene,
And Heaven gave it dew as beauty's fee—
For what is beautiful belongs to Thee,
Invisible exponent of that sense
Which leads us toward eternal recompense—
There came one morn, when skies were clear as love,
Or the fair, spotless plumage of a dove,
An inspiration sweet as budding rose—
The queenliest thing that in a garden grows—
A love, a hope, a joy, a world's desire,
Nursed in the rhythm of angelic choir :
Transfigured by its passion to the form
Of an immortal beauty, in the storm

And whirlwind of its dreaming, there did come
An infinite despair which smote it dumb.
O dumb as pain when pain can find no voice,
Or maiden faith, when faith would fain rejoice,
And clove its being to the final cell
With death and madness, hopelessness and hell.
The thick substantial dust of present death
Closed with its being, and the worm beneath
Insulted it, and all things grim and foul
Rejoiced like devils when there falls a soul.
The sun arose and spring was in the air,
But Fate had been, the bloom was elsewhere.

O bloodless lips of lies so little loth,
How ye have clothed as superstitious growth
The divinity of Truth in colors spun
From reptiles hatched beneath a livid sun,
And stamped the body with the crimson blaze
Of Phallus and the elder mankind's ways.
Ye shall not die, nor shall it ever be:
The grave's forgetfulness is not for thee,
But in the bleak beginning of the pain
Your stricken lives shall moveless aye remain.
The wordless woe of shame without a tongue,
And ye forever in your sinning young
As that first fatal day when manhood fell
In darkness to the dreariness of hell,
Shall drag the damning bulk of futile lies,
Thy soul, to gasp in pain's eternities.

Ah Passion! Let me breathe thy mad desire,
The shock of victory, the hate, the fire!
Godlike, the ardor of thy pregnant lips,
Has brought uncounted ages to eclipse.
A star is there which shines beyond the dream,
Brighter than all the brightness of its theme;
A Form which sunk its strength to man's brief tale
To rise triumphant: Christ, and shall we fail?
Nay, chant it not, the song of things that were.
More potent melody is there to stir
The world's great heart with what time holds in fee,
The world's great heart with what shall better be,
The future's music and the dreamful day
Of an existence in its holier way.
No longer as in musing stand the spheres,

Nor backward as in longing gaze our years,
The buds are brighter that unfold in spring,
And sweeter is the song the children sing ;
The brook is flattered by the gentle breeze,
And birds prophetic sing among the trees ;
Blue skies above and waters blue below :
Love, with that ardor which but Love can know,
Spurns time, space, distance, every care which binds,
And like a lark long silent, when she finds
The poetry which slumbered in her breast
As maddening as the mirth her soul confessed
In rose-strown days of summer, sweet as fame,
When flowed the sweetest song that ever came,
Goes out to meet the coming child of faith,
And suffering is vanquished, conquered death.

O sons of men ! The lives of those who passed
Before you in their anguish to the vast,
Unbounded, most impalpable dim place
Where God's great workers, in their final grace,
Take to their souls the symphonies which pierce
Their spirits as a bard imprisoned verse,
Have never faded from the thoughts which give
The sanctity of manhood ; yet they live !

Yon ocean current, whither bends its course ?
The moving waters, with resistless force,
Unknowing, like a lover in his pride,
Follow their argent sovereign. Sleepless-eyed,
The lily lady of the upper zone,
While flowers are dreaming and the birds are gone
To mix with orient odors in the swoon
Of drowsy Morpheus and the night's dark noon,
When heaven with starry drift is overflowed —
Lone sentinel, a vagrant, fleecy cloud —
Looks mildly down upon the giant's breast
And leads him back through storm to sullen rest.
Who shall impart the secret of the fray ?
Restless the monster until Time's decay ;
Fierce with the strength of passion, fierce as sin,
Yet doomed until the general wreck begin.

Who is there greater than the ills which crowd
Upon his brother man, who is not bowed
Like daisy when the rain comes fiercely down

And robs the flower of its shining crown,
Nor palsied in his spirit by the fear
Of grovelling things conceived in other sphere
Where anarch Hate is greater than his kind—
Nor deaf to grief, nor to his mission blind,
Him more than Cæsar in his Roman fame,
My soul reveres, though all unknown his name.
He, conscious of his manhood's deathless youth,
And servant to no meaner lord than truth,
Whose life is simple unto holiness,
And being man, would not be more nor less,
He cannot die. If yesterday the rose
Intoxicated the blithe bee which goes
Through the wide field and o'er the garden space,
Where'er the living beauty has its place,
And on the morrow felt a mortal pain,
Nor struggling longer, gave itself again
To its omnific Keeper, 'tis but gone
To a more real Somewhere o'er the dawn.

Whether to shape with beasts in sordid guise:
To drown eternity in eager lies,
To lose the loads which grind the soul in doubt,
And wander onward in a drunken rout;
To bask in the reflected warmth of lust—
A Dead Sea fruit, a fruit of shame and dust.
And yet 'tis pleasant; somewhere in the deep
Recesses of thy being, not in sleep,
The deed which binds thee to thy peccant sire,
The chain which links thee to a fate as dire.
The blood which flowed through that great Errant's
veins,
And left the world its glut of maddening pains,
Has razed a paradise and built a hell.
What if the cloistered monk his beads shall tell,
Or nun immured in solemn depths of prayer,
Unhampered by the great world's crime or care?
This shall not bring thee o'er the sunken road—
'Tis thine to find thy certain way to God,
If thou canst find Him, who as most men vow,
Belongs to what we dream, not what we know.

O shining star! t' elude my groaning life
And swim with thee through space beyond the strife;
To squander all my being in the blaze

Of an insentient planet's borrowed rays ;
To lose the intellect which brings me back
Unto my insufficiency and lack
Of every vital principle. The good,
So little, wasted ere I understood,
The noble buried 'neath a weight of shame,
And callous, I, or drunken with ill fame,
The while my better years were at my grasp,
Enamored of the liar's frenzied clasp,
The strumpet Pleasure and the foul god Sloth,
Nursing my weakness like a summer moth,
I slept and dreamed in intellectual night,
And missed an angel, missing my delight.

If thou shouldst stand upon the crumbling shore
While ocean stormed and growled ; with sullen roar
Hurled his artillery against the banks,
And sent his squadrons in their serried ranks ;
While the long lightning tore across the sky
And wave to wave sent back its hoarse reply ;
While screaming gulls, in wild alarm, through space,
Flew with the storm in never-ending race,
So standing, gazing at the waters' roll,
And the deep thunder ringing in thy soul,
Thou mightest feel the fear which Judas felt,
When, traitor, at his Master's feet he knelt.
But straining sight across the writhing sea,
Where death and ruin met in fiendish glee,
From out the blackness of unlooked-for night,
A thing of life, like one in mortal fright,
Beaten by wave and wounded by the gale,
And creeping onward with embarrassed sail,
Like a blanched cloud against the swarthy cope,
A bark thou mightst behold, a world, a hope !
So then the blood which froze within thy heart
Should leap again to life with vital start,
Flooding thy being's depths. Calling to God,
Thou then wouldst wish the ancient Hebrew's rod
That the great wall of waters might divide,
And thou shouldst snatch the victims from the tide.

But even while thy soul is in its fright
And smitten with the dread of Earth's first night,
When the great sun was quenched and darkness fell,
The faith within thee, most invincible,

Should lend thee somewhat of its virile trust,
For truth is certain, destiny is just.
For see! Across the wide expanse and waste,
As if in very fury demons chased
The helpless bark and its poor human freight,
The storm-god hurtles in his strength elate.
Now grows in gloom the sky cheerlessly black,
While Nature deprecates the general wrack.
The hollow thunder of the waves' fierce spite,
The awe of sudden, unremembered night,
The chill of icy death, the mad despair,
The horrid presence of the first great Fear,
And the expected touch of mouldered bones
Amid dank seaweed and insensate stones;
To feed the maw of fishes and become
A mouldering corse where corse can have no tomb—
O horror! through the mariner's shuddering brain,
Who dies how many deaths in grinding pain —
All this and more: and who shall truly tell,
Who knows it not the agony of hell?
Behold it falters. Soon, ah God, too soon,
It shall go down into the depths. The croon
Of evil spirits, rising o'er the gale
And the hoarse moaning of the injured sail,
Make a discordant music in the wind.
It struggles, sorely wounded, as a blind
Man who has missed his way amid the snow,
And turning, knows not where 'tis safe to go,
But trusting Chance, the weak-eyed, giddy Chance,
Follows the siren in deluded trance
Across the trackless wastes where ne'er was path
But led the wanderer to the courts of death.
Locked with the elements in hopeless strife,
And bending lowly to destruction rife,
While heaven pours a humid flood amain,
The sea assaults again and yet again.
With gaping seams and cordage rent and torn,
Across the sea the sinking bark is borne;
With desperate strength a moment here she waits,
While brooding Malice calls the eager Fates.

In stormiest moments greatest deeds are nursed
In their supernal splendor, ere they burst
From the gray charnel, which is their dense home,
Their resting place, their hidden life, their tomb.

And ere the flower came, or ere the fruit
Was redolent of leafy June, the root,
Beneath the gloomy earth fought its dark way
To sunshine and the glory of the day ;
And often, while the snows their chill impressed,
A horrid doubting rankled in its breast,
A fierce disgust, to cease, and ceasing, die ;
But ah ! above the sun, the stars, the sky !
So in the midnights which to poets come,
When the sick body leaves the great soul dumb,
Or carries with it to a final sleep
Melodies immortal else, as strong and deep
As the returning ocean in its strength,
Which laves the world in all its hugest length,
There was a shipwreck, there was storm and woe :
O heedless men, such pain did Collins know !
What boots it now that elegy and song
Above his grave their funeral notes prolong?
What aids it now that bards upon his hearse
Have heaped the tribute of their ardent verse?
Nor sweetest chant that poet ever sung
From the Destroyer one short moment wrung,
Nor bribed awhile the fleeting breath to stay,
Nor fenced from cold and want the sentient clay?

O thus to die anear th' accusing store
Of luxury, while pimp and pander, whore,
Are surfeited with all that makes life sweet,
Are washed in sweat of roses ! Is it meet?
And yet his soul was calm and found a way
To teach the truth 'twas meant that he should say ;
To leave behind the madness of his brain,
His body's atrophy, his foes' disdain,
And in the golden glamor of the East,
With the fair Passions partake Poet's feast.
The while it lasted he was more than dust,
Palernian, manna, were his drink and crust,
And with old Homer in a cloud of song
His soul, his better spirit moved along.

Who walks the beaten path of busy men
Sees common things, nor dreams beyond his ken
Are countries undiscovered ; all his days
Too cheaply sacrificed to common ways,
Behold him, thoughtless, in delusion creep,

The while his life is whirling to its sleep,
And when Tomorrow flits across his path,
'Tis Yesterday, and Yesterday is death.
And this poor creature who is kin to worm,
Nor differing greatly in his mind, in form,
Fashioned like man, but in his vacant mind
The brother of this thing of obscene kind,
This mere machine for living certain days,
Hath damned the poet with his vicious praise,
Hath made of holy things a brutal jest,
Yet he who liveth knoweth what is best.

O weary watcher, heardest thou that cry?
The echoing waves send back a hoarse reply:
The thunder lingered as if it would stay
To rend the universe, and the wild play
Of the supernal forces of the sea
Clutched at the sinking bark, its destined prey.
O'erwearied in the struggle, at the wheel,
The steersman dropped in silence; there did steal
Through his spent frame the gentleness of death
And all his fears were soothed with parting breath.
The senseless corse swam in the waters dark
A moment, then was banquet for the shark.
Shrieked the mad seamen, louder shrieked the gale,
Rending the cordage and the useless sail,
And back to heaven flew despairing moan.
Earth heard with sorrow and gave groan for groan.
Earth heard with sorrow; her maternal breast
Was shaken in the throes of wild unrest,
And through her heart, with instinct vital, true,
The dreadful tidings of disaster flew,
As the old Greeks erst fabled Mercury
To quiet hamlet sleeping by the sea.
Trooping the hardy fisher-folk came down:
Healthy and fearless, weather-beaten, brown.
The sea was in their souls; its restless might
And the weird music which it breathes at night,
The passionate love which the old Norsemen felt,
Or the delirious joy when forth the Celt
To battle in their veins. No fear was theirs,
Their lives too solemn to admit of fears.
Big-limbed as giants of the middle age,
Clovis, great Charles, who in the battle's rage
Found all the promise of their lives' full space,

And fought for glory and the Virgin's grace.
Sudden as anger, quick as passing thought,
And swift to act when acts with risks are fraught,
No weak delay, no hesitating doubt,
But each man firm-resolved within, then out
Upon the heaving waters, wild and waste,
The life-boat where the wrenching bark is cast.
Slow-moving, hidden oft and oft oppressed
By the mad tumult of old Ocean's breast,
To the stern watchers on the shudd'ring shore
Seem meeting sea and sky to whelm them o'er;
Seems angry clouds would seal their doubtful fate,
While howling winds pursue with baffled hate.
A moment in the press, like bird on wing,
Which waits, where diverse winds are strong, to
spring

Above the bars that interpose their force,
And with the gentle zephyrs steer its course—
Such moments are eternities, and life
A bubble in a seething ocean's strife—
The aiding craft stands motionless, then swift
As the all-welcome sun shoots through a rift
In frowning clouds, the sinking bark it gains,
While o'er the din arise such glad refrains
As might be deemed that angels sang such strains:

If one should come from death through antique lands,
Past the bleak place where the grim Shadow stands,
Bringing to men the memory of man's fate
And final doom, and standing at the gate,
The noisy city's gate, preach to the mob
With heartfelt emphasis of tear and sob,
The anguish of decay and gradual grief,
The exile and the pain without relief,
Who, looking into his lack-lustre eyes,
Would grant the truth of such a sacrifice?
Would leave his path to listen to the tale?
Or listening, would not all his senses fail;
And like a child who dreams that in the night
He meets in darkness things of bloodless fright,
So he who harkens in such mournful plight
Might reel in terror, and in terror shun
The presence of a fiend, an evil one.

Nor shalt thou vex the Muse with weak-voiced song,

But rather let the grateful crowd prolong
The hymn of praise for dangers that are o'er:
Behold the rescued seamen on the shore.
Wouldst ask the mother when her babe is chilled
By the contagion, and her soul is filled
With all its horror, to be brave and calm,
To soothe her woe with resignation's balm?
Wouldst ask the lover, when from his weak arms,
His life hope fades, and all her maiden charms,
To turn him from the cypress and the gloom,
The equipage of death, the quiet room,
And the sad passing which so wounds belief,
To mix in action and forget his grief?
So shalt thou ask him, who a moment late,
Trembling in horror, shuddering at the fate
Which stood before him in its hellish form,
To tell the tale of terror and the storm?
Nay! Bring the fruits that in October days
Were gathered, when the glad fields rang with praise;
Bring hither from the vineyard, golden-ripe,
The grape that blushed to madness when the pipe
And mellow flute of jocund shepherd boys
Hymned Ceres, and with love's sweet, harmless joys
The welkin echoed and the virgin grove,
And Earth was pleased, and Life itself was Love.
Bring soothing things that hush the thoughts of
Care,
And if the bashful swain should haply dare
To press a little hand and try a waist—
Which ne'er before such royal strength embraced —
Frown not with awful brow and visage grave;
'Tis fitting: Love is youth and youth Love's slave.
Bring fairest things that nature, art commends,
The luscious fruits that the warm tropic sends,
And like the father, who in days long gone,
Gave what was best to a returning son,
Give ye what dulls the memory of pain
That no remembrance of their woe remain.
Let music seek its place within their souls
Until their senses, while the organ rolls,
Are lulled, and boding phantasies are fled,
And fears are banished to a time long dead.
Love's fondest child, O music most divine!
If one could breathe such fancies as are thine,
Could stamp into the garb of sombre speech

Such vague persuadings which so strangely reach
As flowers toward the ardor of the sun,
And leave the sadness where his life begun —
As Philomel, when through the burdened night,
In radiant robes of song begins her flight,
The while the glowing stars are o'er the earth,
Seeking those stars which seem her place of birth,
Sings golden-throated melodies of bliss—
O chorister of heaven what chant is this!

I turn me to the lilies of the field,
Nor yet unconscious of the scent they yield,
Pass blindly on, though there is at my feet,
As glimpse of heaven's hymning angels sweet,
That something which my life can but regret,
And still I nurse my pain nor would forget.
My latent life is wounded by disdain.
And does the lily suffer the same pain?
I sin not with intention when there is
Within my breast God's great divinest bliss;
I know that something nobler than my clay
Is sobbing for the strength of speech; a ray
Of the first great intelligence is nigh,
And I am weak, so weak that it shall die
As in the common nothingness of what
The world long ages since has all forgot.
O to find words that should bring back the days
Of Christ's own Heaven and meet songs of praise!
I search my being for that magic sense
And find, alas! my own incompetence.
So the calm mind, in its firm citadel,
Listening with scorn to griefs which poets tell,
Makes mock and jeer of all their cherished woe
And laughs at pains which it may never know.

I sit beside the wrinkled marinere
And list with wonder to his tales of fear;
And though the monsters of the stormy deep
Some few brief nights may interrupt my sleep,
'Tis but a passing fear my soul has crost;
And yet methinks my soul has something lost.
Why should I tremble at a tale of woe
And grieve for ills my frame shall never know?
Ah fool! Thou shalt be ferried o'er a stream
That genial Nature deprecates; no beam

From the mild sun, no star in Heaven's breast,
Nor chaste Diana's light shall soothe to rest
The horrid phantasies which burn within.
There in a nascent darkness shall begin
The expiation of thy selfish crimes.
Thou then shalt listen for a voice which chimes
With thine in all the misery of pain,
And if it comes not to thy whirling brain,
Each crowded moment unto thee but tells
The lone possession of immortal hells.

And so beside the ancient man who crept
From peril while the striving waters swept
The leal companions of his voyages
An immolation to the angry seas,
What time the gorgeous sun makes days of June,
I sit with life, and all my life is noon.
A simple story told without device.
My young cheek pales, my blood is as the ice,
And there is that within my languorous frame
Which poets feel when they are thirst for fame.
I know no more than helping hands did reach :
I know no more than on the cheerless beach
The bark which sailed to far-off sunny Ind,
Which wrestled with the tropic Afric wind,
Or shuddered in the grasp of frozen zones,
Was cast, a shattered thing, where dead men's bones
And dank green seaweed and the ocean buds
Are smitten in the fury of the floods.
But yet not wholly lost. The village men,
Who see such things as circling eagles ken
Beneath them in the field, their destined prey,
Came down, and buffeting the waves' wild play,
Snatched from the ocean's maw what fancy chose,
Or labor, and earth's heroes are as those.

What madness, O my brothers, have ye heard
In the long interval since the first Word
Was given to be light to mortal men?
The sophist's why, the proud denier's when,
The rash man's contumely, the fool's vile cant,
The idiot's theory, the madman's rant,
And all the lunacy which lettered ease
Conceives in folly or spawns in disease.
Shades of th' Immortals ! O ye solemn dead !

With your vague passing has all virtue fled?
Do ye, above the splendor of the stars,
Participate in these, our useless jars?
Do spirits quibble o'er a letter's sound
And godheads glory in a coward wound?
O take me, Mother Nature, take me home!
The spirit sickens in this later Rome;
The music which is in my deeper heart
Is crushed and stifled by a bastard art,
And the weak artifice of venal verse
But half conceals the famine and the curse.

Ah Lord of Nature! God forgive my sin!
Who am I that should judge? I look within;
It frights me: I have strayed; how have I erred!
My prophet's vision is but false and blurred;
My flesh is somewhat of the world's own flesh,
And my desires like a hound in leash.
I see the clouds sweep over Heaven's face
And yet the stars keep their appointed place;
The leaves drop from the trees when Autumn shakes
Their branches, and the freezing northwind makes
A melancholy, solemn dirge; the blooms
Which gave to Flora's breath its sweet perfumes
Are massed into the ruin of pale death.
But I cannot forget that somewhere 'neath
Th' inhospitable rigor of the snow
Is that surpassing Goodness which shall show
Its consummation to my spirit eyes
In a diviner place where frowning skies,
And leaden, dull October days which leave
The pathos of their yearning and their grief,
And unfulfilled ambitions, and the stains
And bruises which the sweetest heart retains
Until it stands erect on Zion's plains,
Are but as shadows in the evening cast,
Or half-remembered as a dream that passed.

So if the rose that bloomed on Beauty's breast
Were given to my keeping, as the crest
Of honor and all chivalry, I'd wear,
Proud of my charge, and who should basely dare
Breathe but a thought of shame to one so dear,
My soul would follow to the depths of fear.
Shall I, the keeper of my brother's life,

Refuse mere manliness unto his wife?
I hold him villain who is satisfied
To crawl along his easy path; they lied,
Who wrote that men live for themselves alone,
And living thus, have little care or none
For others who are where life sees no sun.
This truth the soul conceives when first the light
Of consciousness dissolves the gloom and blight:
That there is somewhat in the course of things —
My soul is brother to the bard who sings—
Which brings us back to God's first principle
And makes us witness to truth visible.
I hear no prophet in the silence speak:
I hear no prophet who hath strength to break
The iron bonds which Custom hath put on;
But the faint reflex of a coming dawn
Lights up the mountain-tops and paints the clouds
With more than mortal brightness. The dun shrouds
Of error, which have interposed how long,
And all the sullen statesmanship of wrong,
Are but as airy bubbles on the wind:
A moment seen, then seek and who shall find?
There comes no lord of human kind in state,
No awful demigod, whose nod is fate—
The puppet of a childish game the king,
'Tis men, God's men, a coming age shall bring!
O age of Gold; O Peace! The soul is dumb;
There then shall cease the chiding of the drum,
The snarling of war's trumpet and the cries
Of slaughtered thousands, Mars' grim sacrifice.
No reeking battlefields whose smoke ascends
To courts of Heaven where an angel wends
His weary way to tell of deeds of shame,
But rather him who knew nor taint nor blame,
Nor crawling through the city's lanes the blank,
Wan face of Poverty, whose withered shank
Scarce serves to stay the body in its pain,
Shall mock the fame of art or curse fierce gain.

And one who dreams is mocked by those who fret!
Nor ever statesman lived or poet yet,
Who gave his heart's blood to a people's cause,
Who spoke in certitude of higher laws,
Seeing the flower in the bud, the grove
In the unplanted seed, and strongly clove

To his soul's guide: and far beyond the night
Discerned the gleaming of immortal light,
But turned him in his passion from the ways
Of common deeds, the infamy and blaze
Of what the mob calls glory to the sweet
Sufficiency of his own life to greet
The aspiration which with life was born,
And in the glamor of poetic morn
Went back to God at breaking of the Dawn.

He lives not vainly, who within the night
Saw Heaven's stars, and far beyond the light
Caught glimpses of the truth his soul conceived
When he alone among his kind believed.
Time moves but slowly; men afraid of fate
Turn backward in their frenzy, halt and wait;
Accuse a partial Deity and mourn
Their father's heritage. O bitter scorn!
Ye underlings, arise; he who is blest
Is he who never conquest hath confessed,
Who looked into the heart of things and guessed
Their secrets, which no longer secrets, when
He faced his destiny and stood 'mong men,
The keeper of his soul, and over all
The lord of own being; slave or thrall
No longer, but a Mind which God might scan
As heir to His divinity, a Man!

Seest thou that God, who unto men revealed,
In the world's weak nonage, when the beasts afield
Were 'ware of something that eclipsed the cares
Of those that tended them, and unto prayers
Turned scoffers who were dumb in nameless fears,
The vision of his future and the love
Which flows from godheads? Are there those who
move

As courtiers near the person of the King,
The keepers of his seal, his robe, his ring?
As wares, is Christ a personal thing to hold
And barter in your markets? For the gold
With which we buy a garment makes the soul
As the untainted infant, pure and whole?
Man comes to man and proudly stands between
The promise of his being. The serene
Sweet thankfulness of living his own life

And walking near to God unmoved by strife,
Is held in man, by those who judge the deed,
Not by its full perfection, as the seed
Of an eternal bloom that paradise
Shall foster, when above the parting skies
Th' immortal spirit takes its happy way,
But as the brand of Cain, the dross of clay,
The sign of Heaven's curse, the hellish shame
Of contumacious fiend, and howling blame,
The solemn tonguesters, who disport in lust,
Go back to sin and death, while o'er the dust
Of their fond disapproval mounts on high
That God-in-Man, which God-like cannot die.

I know not God. My soul cannot conceive;
Who gave me consciousness would not bereave
My intellect of shadowy things that pass
Through the mind's mirror, as do in the glass
The unsubstantial features of a face,
The mockery of a form, the tender grace
Of one who sits in his accustomed place.
Lo, ye who falter in a troubled stream!
To him who drank not of the still, salt stream,
Who never by the side of Styx hath stood,
Nor felt its stinging rankling in his blood,
He, as the unborn babe, is senseless, void.
Who met not Death when Death his friend destroyed,
Nor felt the chill that from his wings flew by,
Nor cursed the rheum that glazed each gorgon eye?

Ah Death, what art thou? God? Thou, weird and
strange,
Art Nature, and if Nature's best the change
Which Mother Earth beholds ere season runs
To season, and the glorious things which suns
Behold but in the passing, are the All;
Nay, breathing low the west winds softly call:
He is thy God, who o'er the peasant's pall,
As o'er the monarch's odorous couch still keeps
Divinity untroubled, while the deeps
Are torn by whirlwinds, or the shining stars
Look calmly down where not a ripple mars.

And so, my soul, thou shalt go firmly on
To a most distant future, not alone;

Nor in the evening, when the shadows close
About thee, and thy thought to Heaven goes,
While with the flowers thy body takes its rest,
A tired child that seeks its mother's breast
For comfort which its lips have ne'er expressed,
Ere slow-consuming Death asserts his might,
Shalt thy soul falter. Bravely in the night
Though it be feaful and the way be strange,
Still unappalled, while Nature, Life doth change,
Thou shalt assume the robes which birth deferred
And hear the Voice which whilom prophets heard.
Then thou shalt pierce to depths of being ; gaze
With unaffrighted eyes upon the maze,
Existence, and behold the hidden things,
The mysteries, life's source and whence it springs ;
See death contiguous and leprous sin ;
A phantom fiend who ever looks within,
And curses in his passion the desire
Which wastes his substance as unceasing fire.

A child that stands upon the river's brink
Where ships sail bravely by, or smitten, sink
With precious freights to sordid depths below ;
A child that merely stands, that seeks not so
To learn, but idly looks with restless eyes
Where waves are breaking, or the sea bird flies ;
Or overhead sees clouds pass swiftly on
In thousand shapes and forms, as swiftly gone ;
A child that lives and lives from day to day,
Who sees no future, but in childish play
Grows with the fleeting years to man's estate,
And, standing on the threshold, turns to mate
In sullen gloom with hopeless poverty ;
Who knew no moment when his soul was free :
O such is man ! The stars which burn above,
The solitude, religion of the grove,
The murmuring of waters and the flowers
With which meek maiden Flora decks her bowers,
The clouds that fade at setting of the sun,
The pretty things that frolic races run
With every passing breeze that thrills sweet June,
The placid majesty of the calm moon,
The fervid aspiration of the day,
The evening's stillness brooding o'er the bay,
The dewy morn, the hum of odorous noon

When bees sail idly by, and the faint tune
But heard, ere silent, in the quiet fields—
For these man has no being; Nature yields
His sustenance, and man is satisfied.
And O, to think that Poets since have died
With all sweet music surging in the heart;
Have striven in their agony for art
To give the world the beauteous things which flushed
Through their rapt senses ere the song was hushed !
Have clung in all their passionate distress
To sweetest songs, their misery ! Ah yes,
When Beauty vibrated within the frame,
Which like a dead leaf dropped before there came
To soothe its sadness, loving hands as fain
And gentle as to buds mild April's rain.
When unresponsive life gave back no thrill,
God nestled near the soul ; the spirit still
Was quick with prophecy and trembling, rode
In lightness to a most serene abode,
Took all the largeness of celestial place
And wove the web Eternity, in grace
Of merely worshiping with upturned face
The symbols which Omnipotence had set.
And I, I must believe. I know that yet
You have not wrung the secrets from the womb
Of Ignorance, and Knowledge is a tomb
Wherein are buried many fairest lives,
And nothing of their happiness survives ;
I know that from the world's raw, callow youth
Great souls have perished seeking one sole Truth ;
Great hearts have broken in the pathos of
An unimaginable, formless love ;
Strong men have faltered, beauty shrunk in fear,
And conquerors have fallen, lifeless, sere
As their own glory, while above the din
Thou art alway ; Thou wilt be, and hast been.

But I am troubled ; lest that I should err
I stand apart a lonely worshiper
In the cathedral of the solemn pines ;
My senses faint ; here Thou art and Thy signs.

Who would be to himself most true will leave
The general way of men, nor inly grieve
That he is poisoned for his sweet truth's sake,

But reconciled in his aspiring, take
As attributes of fleshliness the stings
And calumny, the stone which Cant aye flings,
And mounting upward from the lower beast—
As men achieve the greatest from the least—
Shall in the fullness of his perfect thought
(O God's sweet bliss, a battle nobly fought!)
Assume the beauties of that ardent age
When Christ and men were brothers. Nor the rage
Of scoffers, nor the hiss of grosser lives
Shall taint his spirit; for there still survives
In failure, if we fail in noble things,
The goodness of true manhood. Basely clings
The craven to his hearthstone while the world
Goes roaring down the centuries; unfurled
Beyond him in the midst of strife and shame
The standard of his birthright, while the blame
Of "coward, coward," hurts his soul's ill-fame!

'Twas pleasant in the fields of summer's prime
To dream in indolence of that blest time
When the strong soul, armed in its cherished truth,
Should leave the prison of its careless youth,
And in the shock of systems and the growth
Of customs good or evil, nothing loath
To follow Virtue through the gathering storm,
Discern the master in the gliding worm.
But O, poor soul, how thou hast failed! Behind,
The wreck of empires, where a passing wind
Uncovers monuments whose builders since
Have faded into nothingness, from whence
Mayhap they sprang to gasp a few short years,
To yearn forever. Not the bitter tears
Of those who strove in darkness to ascend,
Availed more than the cries avail of friend
Who sees a body left with worms to blend;
Who leaves the place of mourning and puts by
All sense of conquering and lives to die.

Who lives to die? O Soul, what words are these?
What unsubstantial wraith affrights thy peace?
No death is there! Arise. Resume thy state!
They are not lost who some few moments wait
The coming of the porter to the gate.
And yet we falter. There is in the heart

A dastard fear, no felon in the cart
Haled to the gallows sweats in such a fright.
Methought I saw a star gleam through the night
As some see truth; not clearly in the dawn
Of Life's vague Tomorrow, a vision born
In that stern struggle wher from bitter scorn
The soul would shield itself and pining woe;
But strangely, as does one who knows that so
The course of human effort runs to death,
And coming eve shall claim his last short breath.
O Life, I halt before thy guarded door
And little know; would God I could learn more!

There late was one who left his mother's side
To mix with men. Clear-souled and laughing-eyed
As a young hope; as an apostle fain
To smooth the rugged brow of brooding Pain.
O how he longed to leave the narrow ways
Which his hot youth despised, his heart's dispraise;
His unfulfilled ambition; the regret
Of things beyond him; the poor limit set
For human wisdom! But alas! he crept
From thought to thought, while through his being
swept
The worse than madness which such men must know,
The knowledge of his ignorance. Below,
Above, about him, all things pure and sweet,
And in his soul their shadows, while the fleet,
Vague vision fled from him as love retreats
From one who worships madly that which beats
His manhood into nothingness and leaves
The bitter memories which Despair receives.
He gave the best his soul conceived to men
Who mocked his aspiration. Such had been
His pleasure, that if one among his kind
Had held his hand a moment's space, though blind
As sightless one to what he would achieve—
O God, the bitter lives which dreamers live!—
There would have been surcease of all his pain.
Misunderstood and cursed through days of vain
Desire, his spirit took the robes it found
And wounded, fluttered meanly near the ground,
Or rising rarely reached the common heights
Which common men attain in sudden flights.

Ah, then were nights of madness, such as bring
The fires of hell and death's consuming sting!
Before him in the darkness danced the ghosts
Of nameless things of dread in countless hosts.
His life renounced the golden deeds which gleamed
Before his youth when the fair future streamed
To sunset lands of glory, cloud-capped towers,
The homes of poets, the romantic bowers
Where beauty's cheek is soft as budding rose,
And like a bloom of spring, nipped by the snows,
He faded into silentness. O death,
What song, immortal else, died with his breath!
O world of many woes, what crime was his?
Is Life so cheap a thing that it must miss
Its poorest recompense? Is death the friend,
As some still urge, the one whose care shall end
The anguish of most sensitive of souls?
Forever shall we drink from poisoned bowls
E'en to the bitter lees; forever writhe
Through years of terror, while the eager, lithe
Serpent sucks the full heart, and feeds upon
The hopes of manhood? Never yet was born
A bud that thrilled not when the vital sun
Warmed into being gentle things that run
O'er quiet fields and slopes of virgin green,
And give their lives up when the night's fair queen
Looks down in royal state; and if that grief
Should stain the tender heart of flower and leaf
Because the other-sense of beauty died,
Each sister bloom crept closer that the pride
Of Loveliness, unloved, unsatisfied,
Might comfort find in its supremest worth
And grow in sweetness, shedding fragrance forth.

But we are higher than the common buds;
Ours is the innate strength of rocks and floods;
The nobler virtues of the savage beast.
He is most honored who assumes the least
Of gentle deeds and mercy; he is lord
Who leaves the altar for the reddened sword
Of conquest; he is king of kingly men
Who makes the hospital a prison pen
And builds like Tamerlane, a mound of bones
Where Reason once had many thousand thrones,
Where souls were pure, and suffering ill-defined,

And hearts grew warm in love of human kind.

'Tis false, the wail that men were made to weep
The days of their existence. In the deep
Silence when the quick spirit seeks for hints
Of its fore-destined journeying — from whence
We know not — comes a solemn whispering,
Faint as a sudden breeze in thrilling spring,
That those sad actors in the drama done
Have clomb to heights ethereal, and won
What humanity has wept for. And we,
We dare not give to speech our misery!
Sweet life, it cannot be that to the worm
The spirit sinks. These years are but a term
Of sad probation; nothing is that seems;
We move unquietly in doubtful dreams
And give to shadows what the soul should keep
For its omnipotence and faith. We creep
To manhood as disease creeps to its prey,
And dreading Night, yet fearing more the Day,
We but approve our heritage of clay.
I would believe that we do merely wait
Some higher Soul's command, ere o'er the strait
Our purer souls are ferried to assume
The brightness of immortal spirit's bloom.

“Where goest thou?” I heard one ask his friend.
Where goest thou, where shalt thy journey end?
But speak not, lest thy saddest lips confess
Thou knowest not. Thou canst but dimly guess
The haven which shall shelter thee; the lane
Thou treadest is so long and drear, 'twere vain
To bring thy little faculties to bear—
He whom thou seekest is not here, nor there.

It may be that my soul has sped with Time
So many centuries, it were no crime
To nurse the thought that Athens was its home,
Or Egypt, or that peerless city, Rome.
Would God 'twere so, and then my life should be
No weak retreat, no rout, but victory!
For looking back, as greatest men return
To some quaint village, from whose narrow bourne
Their young deeds hurried them, mine eyes should
see

Souls worthy of the Men who died for me.
But they were cursed by evil men and hissed :
Thou knowest not how oft the prophet kissed
The earth which drank his blood ; how oft he fell
In weariness, while the poor feeble shell
That kept his spirit near to grosser things
Was scourged by rods ; thou canst not guess the
stings.

So shall I take the goods the gods decreed—
The chosen offspring of a royal breed—
And ride to fame on what my fathers gave :
They could not carry these unto the grave.
Poor things ! They strove awhile with feeble breath,
And then, like others, went the way to death.
They warmed their hands before a feeble flame
And many went before them ; some few came
In piteous plight, and reeling fell without
The cruel door which shut them ever out.
Who knows if not among these beggars lay
One who had songs as bright as summer day
Forever purling in his heart ? But pride
Kept him apart nor cheered him when he died.

O Fool ! The heart cries "fool." Thou art but one
Of many millions like to thee who run
Uncertainly their checkered race and sink
Back into commonness ; who rarely drink
Of waters other than are bitter ; who
Are thick as buds that take the evening dew ;
Who leave no impress of their passing ; leave
No token of their joyance or their grief ;
Who do their duty but as common men,
Craving no eulogy from poet's pen,
Nor wishing monuments to blazon forth
Their titles or accomplishments or worth ;
Perform the tasks allotted ; and sweet God,
What can be nobler here upon the sod ?
Thou art not from loins of monarch ; no court
Beheld thee crawling in thine infant sport ;
No courtiers hung upon thy puerile choice ;
No maidens languished at thy baby voice ;
Amid the roar of city streets thy play,
Perhaps in filth, outwore the passing day ;
The frugal fare the laborer spreads was thine,
And health and comfort by a right divine.

And in the quiet moments whispers from
An immemorial time when Hope was warm
With her own happiness did lead thee to
The dawn of manhood. Seeing skies were blue
Thou didst not ask if roads were foul or fair,
But went where others went with little care,
And felt at least that men, thy peers, were there.
So is thy dream of greatness o'er, and now,
With chastened spirit and with head bowed low,
Not as in shame, thou shalt take up the thread,
And live thy proper life and eat thy bread.

I saw, as in a vision, many men
Come down the public way. I felt that then
Among these there should be what we call truth.
They were not of the mighty; here a youth
With reverent brows and eyes of solemn gaze
And lips that seemed to breathe forever praise,
And feet I thought that blessed the ground they trod,
Spoke in mild accents of the Father, God.
About him ancient men with eager ears
Walked courteously, and maids whose sudden tears
Were evidence of more than vulgar fears,
Drew near him. Here the thoughtless youth became
An earnest man and felt his burdened frame
Expand with hopes he dimly understood;
And here young wives and coming motherhood
Pressed nearer that the lesson which he taught
Might wed itself to life, to act, to thought.
Soon as he passed me in my being sank
His immortality; my spirit drank
His beauty, my faint soul was filled with light;
A sudden blindness smote my profane sight.
He, when I gazed again, was gone, and I,
I heard as from my heart an awful cry
For something I had missed. I vainly sought
The one that to my sense such comfort brought,
When one drew near me, giving me his hail.
"Who art thou?" "One of those that passed.
Didst fail
To see the Christ?" "The Christ!" "O gracious
God!
Forgive thy bondsman who is as the clod!
O God! I am not worthy. I did fear
Thy thunders and Thine only Son was here!

And thou—" But even as I spake he rose
Above me and my heart was in the throes
Of more than death. O ashes, ashes, dust!
That thou shouldst miss Him in the fire and lust
Of earthly pride. These eyes that gazed upon
His brightness are accursed, and He is gone.
Sweet heart, O leave me not, lest life should be
One long-continued hell. O Misery,
The wife that flutters ever at my side,
Most vile procuress, cruel, cruel bride!
There is no balm in Gilead. Nay, there is!
Take up thy staff and go; men deem it bliss
To lead the nations to the promised land.
Though thou 'rt unworthy One shall understand;
Even though thou failst One shall behold thy aim
And seraphs near the throne shall hear thy name.
So I was comforted; my sense still reels
As one who goes into the night and feels
The soul of tube-rose quivering on the air,
Hears unaccustomed sounds and knows that there
Are moving dreadful things which bring him back
To the sad state of groping and the lack
Of trusting faith; but rising in his might,
Casts off the sordid things, and in the light
Of re-awakened manhood, scorns to give
One jot of self to what but fools believe.

Now thou art Man! The soul, forever thine,
Should be a beacon to all coming time,
That those who follow o'er the devious way—
As thou hast gone from evil night to day—
May know the Good which thou didst fail to grasp,
And shun with horror the foul Presence' clasp.
Each life should lend thee something of its own
So thine should not be fever, fret and moan
Eternally; thou canst not well accept
The teaching that until grim fate has swept
The globe clear of it millions, life shall be
A putrid stream lost in a still, salt sea.
Thou canst not trace the vital hope which leads
Thee to the altar where the faint heart bleeds
In pathos not to be expressed; thou seest
The Victim and the Sacrifice and Priest,
But not Him whom thou seekest; still the earth
Moves in its circles ever sending forth

Successive generations to become
More worthy, ere they seek the silent tomb.

O that my heart had strength of its desire,
The seer's vision and the poet's fire,
To speak in living words the thoughts that raise
My spirit o'er the evil deeds and ways!
When I as bird in narrow cage, look out
Upon the world that stretches wide about,
And hear the babel which ascends fore'er,
I turn in terror, shrink in mortal fear,
Lest I should be confounded in the crowd.
One rushing 'mid the many, shrieked aloud:
"Lo, here is one of ye; behold him here!
Give him of that which ye do prize so dear —
The laurel wreath to bind his youthful brows,
And holy wines, and women in his house,
And purple garments that shall wrap his limbs,
And honeyed praise, until his glory swims
Like incense o'er him; I am one of ye."
They made a place for him among them, he
Was crowned with flowers, and a maid whose frame
Glowed through the robe she wore, beside him came
And took his hand, and stroked his cheek, and smiled
Upon him in her passion with a wild,
Fierce gleaming in her eyes. He could not tear
The siren from his soul, and she was fair.
Next morrow, strangers passing on the way,
Beheld a corpse cast carelessly away,
While from a mansion sounds of heedless cheer
Smote terribly upon the listener's ear.

Ah Life, desert me not! I am not fit
To take the journey from this planet yet;
Thou art so sweet a thing, not even bride
Is lovelier; I would with thee abide
Some certain months; the grave is damp and chill,
And its wan inmates are forever still,
Save that the worms hold banquets nightly, or
Roll their foul carcases in ghastly war.
And yet my duty is not done; my soul,
A fragment of a natural sweet whole,
Needs time for her assumptions, cannot grow
To its determined sweetness lest that so
It gathers strength despite of scourge and scoff,

And in the quiet moments purges off
The dross that clings to it; not easy when
It is a soul like that of other men.

Whence came I? Who can tell? Speak, thou
 great Cause,
That erstwhile unto worlds gave dureful laws;
Speak, that my hope shall leave the common road,
Nor urged along by sharp constraint and goad,
As herding sheep, I shall perceive the way
My feet should follow, guided by a ray
Of Thine intelligence. My spirit sleeps,
Or in forgetfulness its idol keeps
In close embrace. It pitifully clings
To shreds of teaching and such baser things.
One tells me I should leave the street and close
My private door alike on friends and foes
Lest I be tainted with the bloody stain
Of commerce and the world's desire and pain.
Yet I could hear the roar of city marts
And the faint echo of those mighty hearts
That broke in anguish while the mob looked on.
O friend, dost think the heart can banish scorn
From her secretest chambers as a child
Forgets a moment later him who smiled
Upon it in its play? If it were so
Then life would not have room for grief and woe.

Another comes from out the sad, dead Past;
A mighty one, whose voice, like organ blast,
Rings in my memory; nor shall it cease
Until life ceases and I make my peace.
"Why lingerest thou? Arise, the world has need
Of men who hold no coward-purposed creed.
The path is plain before thee. Canst evade
The light that blazes 'bove thee? Undismayed
Go forth among thy brothers; take thy place
Among the chosen ones, and by that grace
Thou shalt be deemed most worthy." And I said
"'Fore God the king is dead, the king is dead."

A cry came up from the dim city streets.
I strove to lose its meaning, but it beats
Eternally within my brain. It breaks
Upon mine ear unceasingly and makes

Me guilty as the felon who destroyed
The habitation of the sanctified.
I hear it. 'Tis a brother who is cast
Among the animals to pray and fast.
Soul of my soul! cast out among the swine
And the unclean. O charity divine!
What carest thou for him who meanly works
Down in the dust and ashes? Madness lurks
Beside him, and a peaceful, lonely grave
Shall grant the rest his sober wishes crave.
What matters it that one should sink unseen,
Or many hundreds? It has always been
A customary virtue to inter
The meagre frame with proper speed and care.
Some lordling or some haughty village sage
Will honor with a nod the equipage
That hurries by his door to give to earth
The remnant of a life which cursed its birth.
Yet God, these are Thy creatures. Thou hast made
A universe for him who soon is laid
Within the narrow confines of the tomb.
Sweet rest! He leaves his life's restricted room
For what? Alas! Who of Thy creatures knows?
God, God, who of these millions ere he goes
To his last sleep learns more than other men
Of what his life will be, may be, or has been?

Where is thy brother? Crawling o'er the road
His faint soul staggers 'neath a weary load.
He heard in childhood mother-lips that sung
Sweet songs of infancy and childlike clung
About her neck and felt her matron eyes
Draw down a guardian angel from the skies
To watch her dear one; or upon her knee
He lisped a tender tale of baby glee.
The sunbeam that lit up the modest room,
The passing butterfly, the common bloom
Adorning village ways,—these were the toys
Of innocence; and now his simple joys
Forgotten, knowst thou where he sadly crawls,
A shadow of despair until Fate calls?

Foul-throated liar, thou art most accursed
Who swearst that man of God's works is the worst
And least divine; but thou wilt modify

Thy judgment. Thou hast heard a savage cry.
The beast is hungry; let him starve and die.
Thou seest a people rise in their despair,
And neither God, nor Love, nor Truth is there,
But some vile-visaged brute that ever lusts
For human blood as these men cry for crusts.

What then avails thy sophistry when deeds
Like these are wrought; when a great nation bleeds
And sinks to savage level? What avails
The statesman's eloquence, or poet's tales,
Or massive monuments of precious gold,
Or temples where your children worship old
And later gods? What good, we say, of this,
When he who listens hears the serpent's hiss
And marks a grinning Judas give the kiss?
Dost think that numbers make a mighty state,
And soft, sweet words of promise? Ah, what fate
What doom, what stern revenge hath Time in store
For these mad recreants? Ye hear the roar
Of mighty waters, and the pilot sleeps
With shameless comrades while the storm-wind
sweeps
Across the world and bitter rains descend,
'Whelming in ruin lover, foe and friend.
Ye see the noble, generous and brave
Creep meekly to a lone, neglected grave;
Or, if one rises in his virtue proud
To speak the truth his soul conceived, a crowd
Of basest men assail his life with lies
And half the nation longs to pluck his eyes
And burn his heart in sacrificial fire.
Sweet soul, such noble men, such chaste desire!

By Heaven, the heart grows sick! Is man in truth
The monster he is painted? The sharp tooth
Of many a serpent feeds upon his flesh,
And Circe loiters near with biting lash
To keep her own, how few! I cannot grant,
Though Satan lower upon me arrogant,
That this fair frame, this pleasing life, this soul,
Is but the stench we make it. Lo! the mole,
Whose poor existence seems so little worth,
Weak-eyed and lonely, delving in the earth
And seeing rarely stars that shine on high,

Or the great sun that climbs the morning sky,
Or flowers that nod with every passing breeze ;
Nor hears the murmur of tumultuous seas
Where mariners sing sweetly through the day.
He, comrade of the worm, builds in the clay
His dedal mansion where he safe may rest
From storm and enemy and so is blest.

And so it seems to me I work below
The level of my nature, I who go
Through this slave-market, where he turns aside,
My wealthier friend, lest that the one who cried
Should spoil his feasting. It is worth a life
To eat his meal he deems, and with his wife,
The latest partner of his honored bed,
Blaspheme the knave who wishes he were dead.
Man is at best a sorry thing. We have,
He swears, the place in life the great gods gave.
The king receives his purple from above,
The maid her husband if she deign to love
But one of many, or if not, the town,
While she is young and ere jade Fortune frown,
Some wealthy blockhead with a tender heart
May deck the triumph of her maiden art.

Be still, thou wretched one ! Durst thou assail
With such vile vaporings the solemn, pale
Sweet Man God who put on the robes of clay
And made his journey o'er the stony way?
I will not be balked of mine inheritance.
One told me ages since — he looked with glance
That pierced to hidden causes — that my thought
Was mine eternally ; my life is fraught
With subtile meanings, songs that need not words,
Deeds sweet as harmony of heavenly chords,
Vague aspirations, love and joy and hope ;
Desires bounded by no narrow scope,
But dureful as eternity. O soul,
Thou knowest now what station is thy goal !
If flesh is burden but a little while
It shall be borne, and who is wise may smile
In very ecstasy. The infant sleeps
Upon its mother's breast ; who knows what deeps
Of love and knowledge, while an angel round
Is hovering, its baby wish may sound ?

Whence came the smile that parts those tender lips?
Wilt say, O man of learning, what eclipse
Of its young dreaming has lit up its face
And given it God and glory and the grace
Of one who sees his happier home and place?

We reason from intention and desire;
Our thoughts take hue as so our deeds require.
Who of us durst, erect, with thrilling words,
Request interpretation of those chords
That stifle in sheer silence? Thou hast heard
A still, small voice cry pleadingly; allured
By alabaster limbs whose nakedness
Seduced thy spirit, thou didst forward press
With wide, bleared eyes to certain deeds of shame,
And gave thy manhood to the fiend, Ill-Fame.
When Night hung out her sable robe and stars,
Then thou didst seek to overmount the bars
Of fate about thee, but the chisel mars
The statue when the hand is weak that guides;
As with the fury of redundant tides
Comes back the consciousness of bloody deeds,
And where the garden was are rankest weeds.

This world-thought runs through narrow hearts that
shrink
From active Doing as upon the brink
Of nether hell, a late damned soul recoils
With vain remonstrance while a devil smiles.
Thou hast surrendered so much of the good
The world delivered thee, ere understood;
Made truce with fleshly things or given up
The altar and the chrism and the cup.
The dove, no longer emblem for such men,
Is immolated, while from sordid pen,
With hideous gruntings, things of filth pour forth,
Staining the green old lap of Mother Earth;
The swarthy bull-god of malignant leer
Has yearned for this sweet advent many a year.
How glows his heart that now the chosen race
Receive their privilege by royal grace.
O brother men! the sea is trackless, waste;
No guiding light is near, no beacon placed;
No welcome lamp upon the rockbound shore
Shall guide thy trembling bark the waters o'er;

One twinkling star, obscure and strangely dim,
Shall claim the grateful seaman's matin hymn;
One shining star which men refuse to see
Shall show a certain light, safe, true to thee.

There lingers in my heart the memory
Of ancient peril and grave courtesy,
Sweet-featured maidens held the story close:
It thrilled them as the summer rain the rose.
I see him booted, spurred, and whiskered, fierce,
The cavalier de Leon, who did pierce
Through sunny glades of Florida inspired
By a most sweetly solemn hope which fired
His eager Spanish heart with joy beyond
The poor limitations of our speech. Fond
Soldier of capricious fate, the joyous way
He followed was so fair who would not pray
That such men, poets in their daily lives —
An echo of that sweetest chant survives—
Should grasp the hand of fickle Chance and go
With that dear girl to regions not of woe.
He felt within his soul the song which leads
Men on to deeds of daring. The hearts bleed
That Phlegethon should gulf them 'neath its tide;
That wine of life held up but still denied
Should mock such spirits! O sweet Fountain, far
Beyond our daily ways; O joys that are
Fore'er to be, but ne'er within our grasp!
O Immortality! O Love, whose clasp,
Blood-warm and tender as the kiss of love,
Thou shinest o'er us as the stars above,
I call thee, but the winds have drowned my call;
I seek thee in the storm, I faint, I fall
Upon the dewy grass, the cool wet grass.
My life is as a cup of brittle glass
That spills its wine and shatters in the dust
Of all its fleshliness. Beneath the crust
Of this exterior self my soul is faint
As a late bud of Autumn when the taint
And mildew are upon the cheerless field.
But O, the coming Spring shall surely yield
The buds that whilom reached up toward mine eyes,
The glory and the gleam of Paradise!

Spirit of Beauty! Uncreated God!

Immortal witness of our truth ! Thou rod
Whereon so many aching hearts did lean !
Eternal Impulse ! Life is but a screen
That shuts us from thee. Soul of all that stirs
The secret depths of God's great universe !
To thee the worm is fair, and fair the stars,
And very fair the soul, despite of scars,
That climbs on its old ruins up the slope
Of Doing. Thou canst see it blindly grope,
Canst hear it weeping in the sudden night—
O give me strength of speech, give me the light !
A subtle serpent warms him in my breast,
A singing bird has left the cherished nest ;
The form has faded, but I hear the song :
Tomorrow comes not, and the night is long.
Dost hear my spirit sobbing in the cold
So faint and feeble that was erst so bold ?
O life beyond me, life that mocks my touch !
Ineffable sweet fancies ! Thou art such
As ravished quite the souls of elder seers.
I am a frozen fount, a well of tears,
A shadow in the sun, a stricken form
That seeks the fragments shattered in the storm.
O Immortality ! O God ! O Love !
Poor speechless one, that like a dying dove
Receives the grim, swart Shadow while the day
Is smiling in the Heavens, worlds away
Beyond the splendor of undying suns
Is that to which thy yearning, rapt soul runs.
Who died for me that I might live ; who bled
Upon the cruel cross ; whose thorn-crowned head
Sank in sheer sadness on his furrowed breast,
Of him am I a vassal. It were best
My lips should not profane the beauty of
The Crucified ; my aching heart has wove
A garland of imperishable love.

All that I am proceeds from something more
Than mere extrinsic ashes. They who bore
Within their breasts perennial sweet streams
Of mellow song and hopes as bright as dreams
That nestle 'neath the horn of Winter's moon
Moved cheerfully along with sense attune
And seeing eyes. They were not pained, athirst
With what the clay demands. O still uncurs'd

In lowly-reverent knowledge at a shrine
Of unimagined splendor the divine,
Fair sons of song bowed down in meekest thought
And lived with Fancy and each hope that caught
Up toward the hyaline. They left the shell
Of cumbrous flesh as prisoned bird the cell
Which chained its song to silence, and alone
In their pure simpleness knelt meekly down
With heart laid bare that all the world might see
The faith within them flowing back to Thee.

O Beauty immemorial ! I pant
For thy sweet grace as doth a bird in want
Of all its mother's gentleness. I stand
Deep in the centre of a twilight land,
Hearing the bursts of music that arise
With subtile perfume from the flowers whose eyes
Are yet unclosed in slumber. Echoes come
From out the wood's deep stillness, else too dumb,
Of chirping grasshoppers ; the patient bleat
Of quiet, browsing sheep, while with the fleet
Vague wind of summer steals a dying tone,
Piercing in sweetness, from pipe of sheep-boy blown.
O happy, happy boy ! O Arcadie !
Sweet vales my human eyes shall never see ;
Sweet paths my feet shall never tread ; sweet lanes
O'er which the trees bend lovingly, 'mid strains
Of harmony blown from embowered isles
Where o'er his lyre the bright Apollo smiles.

Here in the dewy greenness of the grass,
Mingling with bees and butterflies, I pass
Into each changeful mood my fancy weaves,
Of thought divinest or of fear that grieves.
I feel the madness of yon driving cloud
Which flees before the breeze that sings aloud ;
I sink into the lily's languorous swoon,
Or dream the whole day long with rose of June.
I am at one with Nature ; I have grown
Up to my wishes ; I embrace each zone
And walk the higher fields of ambient air ;
He is his own creator who will dare.
The lovely ladies of the antique years
Sweep by me, blushing to their rosy ears,
And gallant men who bled for woman's smile ;

I am transpierced by music all the while ;
There is a murmur as of housing bees ;
A moisture-laden wind from sapphire seas
Is kissing every bud that reaches up,
While bees drink honey from the flower cup.
The landscape swims a tremulous, long wave
Continuous, and noisy sparrows lave
Their bodies in the brook ; all sense is rife
With intimated love — and this is life !

Why wilt thou cross my path, thou gliding thing?
Thou art unto my dream as serpent's sting
To bounding deer. I hate this crawling worm
Which seems to say: " O thou art earthly, form
Fashioned so differently, yet unto me
Kinsman and brother of the dust. Lo, we
Who are at enmity have come from one
Sweet Mother ; I was fathered by the Sun."

Yet when he comes, that blear-eyed, sad, thin Shape
From whose lethean breath is no escape,
I think I shall lie peacefully with this
Mere crawling worm which now disturbs my bliss.
But yet I do not think that this poor slime,
So nearly fluid, is like me, through time
Participant in my Eternity.
I know not wherefore comes the hope to me ;
I do not know myself ; I am unaware
Of most apparent things ; I sit and stare
With dull, glazed eyes at the blue skies that bend
Above me, and I cannot guess my end.

I heard a bell toll midnight, and a cry
Rose up within me: " What if I should die? "
A chained dog barked. List! That was but thyself
That moaned ; nor pomp of Tudor nor of Guelph,
More than the poverty of laboring carle,
Shall heal thy direst hurt. The beast may snarl
And bay the shining moon in fierce despite,
But still the moon is empress of the night.
Who knows what moves above him? Who has seer
God in the splendor of transcendent sheen?
Not thou, O sophist, with weak eyes avert
From the bold gaze of truth ; thy God is hurt
With questioning, and falls to earth a mass

Of broken gold and common clay and brass.

I have within my heart a shrine which He
May deem unworthy ; yet if unto me
An angel from the throne came with the fire,
I think I would but break in my desire.
O, something beats and burns within my brain ;
My heart throbs restlessly ; there is a stain
Upon me ; I have left the stubborn path ;
Each canker-worm about me tells of death ;
The fruit is putrid on the groaning tree,
And loathsome things are swimming in the sea.
Forget me not, sweet Christ, I pray to thee.

I said unto myself when Flora touched
The hearts of flowers, and a tube-rose clutched
A vagrant sunbeam : “ This is all for me ;
I am of the world’s mightiest ; I see
The causes, I behold the ends, I leap
Beyond my destiny.” I did but sleep
And dream unquietly, and waking, found
A dying tube-rose broken on the ground.

Forever and forever through my days
My soul confounds itself in narrow ways ;
Forever and forever leaves behind
So much of what it was, and in a blind,
Wild revelry goes on to what may come —
The Poet’s fame, a Woman’s love, the Tomb.

O hear me, Mother-Nature. Thou hast brought
Us upward from the ashes. I have caught
No murmur in the silence which to me
Gave evidence that thou wert near. I see,
When twilight lingers o’er the easeless earth,
In the bare heavens a shining star comes forth ;
I listen for thy tone, a voice divine,
But all is silence yet ; the star may shine
Above, beyond me through eternity —
What profits this if thou dost hide from me ?

Yon little six-years old has found a flower,
A violet that bloomed its fleeting hour
Dreaming of summer seas and God’s clear sky,
The hum of bees, the beauteous butterfly ;

He holds it to him as a man might hold
Her whom his heart desired in closest fold ;
As if his heart were ravished by the scent
And beauty, but the bloom is withered, spent,
And dies upon him in a fleeting glow
Of its supremest worth. All things are so.
When she who loved me left me here alone
I was as one who walked with death ; the tone
Of his hoarse voice forever beat within
My consciousness ; the leprous, foul hag Sin
Griped at my soul and lured me with her eyes
To regions not of love. With sad surmise
I called upon her who had gone from me.
A light was o'er me ; from the plangent sea
Came music as of heaven. I was strong
In re-awakened manhood, for among
The thoughts that crowded back upon my brain,
And cleansed my being of its dross and stain,
This one was uppermost : " I love thee yet ;
I am of thee ; I deem thee, dear, most fit
Of those about us to assume the care
Of what I am. O Love, I hold thee dear."
Sweet life, that Woman so should speak to me ;
Should come unto my keeping trustingly.
O am I worthy that this Other-Life
Should speak with rosebud lips, " I am thy Wife " ?
What is there in this tenement of clay
That could attract a soul like hers ? A ray
From the untainted sun was not more pure,
And yet she loved me, and love will endure.

And so I think that though the violet fade
And in its narrow crypt the corpse is laid,
The natural sweetness of whate'er is gone
Lingers in memory as the cherished tone
Of a sweet voice is heard when all is still
And nought is moving save the wind to fill
The sails of vessels which too soon will slip
Their cables and then out upon the deep.
All that we love may change but cannot die.
Though clouds obscure, the sun is climbing high ;
And when the rain beats roses to the dust,
Behold, another bud breaks through earth's crust.

Young Love, with roses crushed upon his lips,

And breath as sweet as honey the bee sips
From languorous lilies on an August noon,
Came unto me and made my sense attune
To all the mirthfulness of poet's chant.
Ah, that my lips could speak for Love in want !
He touched mine eyes with his soft, balmy hand :
" So," murmured he, " you now will understand."
But when I sought to take his hand in mine,
He fled from me and left me lorn to pine.
O that the lily should exhale its scent
Upon the wide, waste air. Such beauty sent
From courts of unimagined sheen and love
Where God sees angels in fond homage move !
But all things are appointed. He works well
Who dreams of Heaven though he fall near Hell.
I am convinced that in yon shining orb
Which seems to smile on this revolving globe,
There are who agonized for us and died ;
The souls of those whom God has beautified.
For life is a succession ; we acquire
Whate'er the prophet left us ere to higher
And serener worlds he took his glorious flight,
Leaving behind his painfulness and blight ;
And in the Paradise for us create,
Who turns to muse on grief since past, or fate ?
So in my heart a song rose into form,
An echo of a descant heard in storm ;
The music of a happy bird which thrilled
My soul, and all the dull, dead silence filled
With melody ; and shapes as bright as those
Which flitted through the mind of him who rose
In the world's fair youth to sing his lofty song
Of Troy's destruction and Achilles young,
Were with me in my dreams and made my days
As beautiful as summer when the maize
Is ripening and the woods are green and cool,
When heart meets heart in love, O full, too full.

Sing on, sweet Bird ! The heart too soon grows old ;
Life's roses die with Love when Life is cold,
And in the Garden where the petals fade
Into the commonness of death, the spade
That heaps the earth upon the stricken bloom
Disturbs unnoted bones in narrow tomb.

O soul, that in the garb of human clay
Dost wait and watch from bitter day to day
Questioning the silent years that slowly go,
He yet will come whom thou as god shalt know.
For to each other gods are not unknown,
But speak in music as of organ tone;
And in the common buds that deck the way
Their feet shall tread, see beauties that betray
Their high divinity; o'erleap the stars,
Avoid the taint of suffering and its scars,
And move in their apportioned splendor where
Lush banks of asphodel perfume the air.
O Love, that never spake our human speech,
Come thou to me here in the dust! I reach
A timorous hand out in the dark; mine eyes
Are seared and stricken; on my soul there lies
The accumulated weight of fruitless years,
And hope has died or given place to fears
Which make this earth the hell it seems; O Love,
I bleed here in the silence! Still above
The shining stars that gleam throughout the night
My soul would gird itself for venturous flight.

O Love, I am made mortal! I have lost
The vision and the beauty which once crossed
My spirit sight; I have sunk back to earth
And lost the loveliness born with my birth;
I have acquired the taint the flesh takes on;
The curse is with me nor will e'er be gone.
Sweet Light, that rose a beacon on my path,
In whose fond eyes is fire that mocks at death,
Sweet empress of my life, I come to thee
In the meek raiment of my manhood! We
Have drunk from one pure fount to fond excess.
O rosebud girl, with thee life is the bliss
Made visible in seraphs at the throne
Of the Eternal in that higher zone
Which swims before the gaze of poets, mad
With beauty when with spring the song is glad!
Thou wilt not leave me in the dust and sin.
With thou beside that crown I yet may win
Which glorifies the brow that wears it. Take
Me unto thee, thou canst immortal make
Him who is thine, else futile flesh and clay;
Thou art the sunrise of my summer day,

A song perpetual ringing in mine ears,
A refuge in distress, a balm for tears;
I would renounce whate'er is dear to me,
Almost my God for very love of thee!

Is it the beast within me that cries out
In raging lust, stung by the demure pout
Of her arch lips? Ah no! Believe me, Sweet,
I love thee for thyself alone. My soul did meet
Her purer self, when standing face to face,
Thou look'dst upon me in meek maiden grace.
O heart, thou wilt not blame if earth still clings
To him who beats his prison bars with wings
So pitifully weak. Thou wilt not blame
If in the evening, 'neath the weight of shame,
He stoops and stumbles o'er the dusty way:
So easy to condemn for those whom day
Apparels in a robe of sheening mist;
But yet there are whose brows have ne'er been
kissed,
Who linger in the valley when the sun
Goes glimmering down the west, and time has spun
A checkered thread into the woof of years,
For 'mid his laughter Time has place for tears.

The world roars out in suffering and lust;
The grave is deep that shall receive my dust;
War rides upon the blast, and hell yawns wide,
But life is sweet; I am as deified.
Life struggles upward and is strangely moved,
But Life at best speaks this — "I once was loved."

All night the rain came down upon the earth;
The northwind moaned like infant at its birth,
But sleep eluded me. The rosy child,
Methought he hovered o'er me there and smiled
Like a coy maid that hesitates, but so
Love's embers by withdrawal yet may glow
As in their pristine splendor, fled away
From my desirous clasp, and when the day
Came unto me the lily drooped its head
A near a rose the storm had left there dead.
There is a sympathy in natural things
For him who listens to the song which sings
Itself in murmurous haunts of summer, when

God makes His skies seem bluer unto men.
There is a fellowship of buds and grass,
The grazing beasts, and changeful clouds which
pass
Athwart the heavens with the soul of man,
Each is the witness of a perfect plan.
And therefore, when my heart is stained with
gloom,
Its sorrow is revealed in cloud and bloom.

One comes from out the noisy market-place
Where men are trodden down like weeds; the
grace
Of youth long since has fled his narrow brow;
He lives but in the whirl and gasp of Now;
For him tomorrow comes as yesterday
Came unto men and went upon its way
Down the long aisle to nothingness; he sees
With heedless eyes, he drinks but of the lees
The gilded goblet holds; he is accurst
Of all the gods with a most quenchless thirst
For glinting gold. O that the life of Man
Should go back unto beasts and lower than
Its proper level! It is sad indeed
That he should lose the flower for the weed.

O night of quiet thoughts! O thoughts that make
The soul seem sweeter for the sweet soul's sake!
I would so closely cleave to thee, not death,
Nor calumny, nor that worse crime which hath
Become the virtue of an age so base
That flesh is offered in each public place,
Should tempt me from thee. I would be
Thy Ganymede, and bringing unto thee
Whate'er of pure and good the soul should find,
Live, though unknown, not less than Man in mind.
For he is man who comes to that erect
And fitting stature which the gods expect,
And even with the gods he yet may sit
Who is himself. The soul is burned and bit
By the vile snake that nestles near the place
Of daily meeting. What is miscalled grace
Is slavery, the state that leads us back
To our inherent littleness. We lack
Or scorn the chrism which shall make divine

The one who gains it. No apparent sign
Is written on the brow of Socrates:
So little less than god, not centuries
Of battle, death, dishonor, have erased
The glory of his being. Unabased,
And simply Man, he went his quiet way
Adown the winding road, and when the day
Shot its last beams athwart his prison cell
He closed his eyes and bade the world farewell.

Shalt thou, for whom such souls have gasped and
died,

Linger within the shadow? The deep tide
Of being sweeps thee to Eternity;
And where is God? And what shall come to thee
When the weak heart stops beating and thine eyes
Are closed forever? The crawling serpent dies
Amid the flowers when the winds are low,
And Man dies! Soul, thou dost so little know,
Thine efforts are so futile, that to be
Is more than death. The eyes that ope to see
Are stricken with a sudden blindness; hate
Lurks near thy dwelling-place; things miscreate
Delude thee into deeds of daring, deeds that bring
Remorse and bale and hell's unending sting

O Mother-Nature, if 'tis willed that I
Should leave the pleasant places and put by
All sense of conquering, thou wilt be nigh.
The stars may leave me in the night; the sun
Forget his tender bride; the ocean run
Not to his argent paramour, the moon;
But I will fear not, for within a tune
Blown from moist banks of amaranth shall fill
Me as with ichor of the gods. I thrill
As does a rose that takes the evening dew
After its long denial. Life is true
To all its aspirations; Life is sweet,
Though sadly with the Arch-Fear it must meet,
As sudden fragrance of the blowing thyme
And unapparent songs and bursts of rhyme.

Things are but seeming, and the soul acquires
The ardor of its visions; our desires
Are truer to the Man than all the deeds

Witnessed by thousands. While the faint heart
bleeds
The lips may wear a smile that does belie
The grief that breaks us; God is ever nigh.
Truth from her station overlooks the world;
Above, her dazzling banner fair unfurled,
Leads shouting nations to the promised land.
We have outgrown old custom, and we stand
So near to duty that the radiance of
His unremembered presence makes us move
No longer as in blindness, but as men
Who take their fathers' places and who gain
So much by doing that the soul believes
The whispered intimations it receives,
When in the night it leaves the baser clod
And takes its journey to the Father, God!





CREDO.

Dear God, it is not written we shall fade
Into the empty air; it cannot be
That we are lost as waves within the sea
After the storm and the wild winds are laid.
And yet we falter on the brink, afraid
Of the long journey which shall lead to Thee
Who art far hidden in a mystery
Beyond the loftiest guess that man has made.
Ages have passed, and with them men have gone
Out of this curious thing which we call life
Above our knowing. Thou alone art God
Who gavest suns and systems and the dawn,
Faith in the darkness, reason in the strife,
To those who yield not kinship with the clod!

WIND OF THE MORNING.

O the feel of the wind in the morning
Ere the stars from the sky are gone;
Ere a note is heard from a wakened bird
Who is mad with the joy of dawn.
O the song of the wind in the tree-tops
Which give back in delight the tune,
And afar the sea croons caressingly
To the dreamful heart of June.
O wind of the morning! O silence!
O passion of love without stain!
What vindictive god shall awake with a nod
The city to effort and pain?
O wind of the morning, forever
The struggle, the sorrow, the loss;
When beauty is fled what remains but the dead,
Pierced corpse at the foot of the cross?
O wind that is sweet in the city
With odor of pine and of fir,
Bear swift as a dove to the Soul I love
The sweetness of incense and myrrh.
The grasses, O wind of the morning,
Look up to their parent Sun;
The flowers have heard thy whispered word
That the long, dark night is gone.
But the city, O wind of the morning,

Like a beggar made suddenly bare,
Shows hideous scars to the wondering stars
In the fields of upper air.
O wind of the morning, to gather
The flowers you woke to mirth ;
To walk as a god o'er the ways you trod
From bound to bound of the earth.
To gather thy songs, O wild, wild wind,
Their fragrance of distant slopes,
To mount beyond the path of despond
Where fainting Fancy gropes.
To rifle the fields of the morning
With jubilant, joyous heart ;
Where never a care shall taint the air
Unvexed by the teeming mart.
O the feel of the wind in the morning !
O wind that is sweet, sweet, sweet !
Yield us thy fire that the wings of desire
May move with the speed of thy feet.
O wind of the morning, O wild wind,
Upraise us, uplift us, inspire ;
That the sons of earth shall have heed of worth,
Shall be purged as with sacred fire.
Shall be lifted, O wind of the morning,
To heights of Olympian song,
From the sighs and tears, from the dupes and fears,
And the shadow of ancient wrong.

THE TRAITOR.

I am a traitor, God be praised. I hate
The mercenary wretch who holds a man
As metal of the mint. Th' American
Has so confounded commerce with the state
That Mulciber sees willing hordes who wait
In the dark chamber where the life-blood ran
From the foul shambles, while the swarthy clan
Stabbed Freedom, in blind idolatry elate.
Hear me, Mnemosyne, and thou of old
Named Themis, hear, and by the great gods smite
With keen-edged sword this harlot who has sold
Her children for the pleasure of a night,
Lest in the gathering gloom the shroud be rolled
About a corpse which Zeus once crowned with light !

AMERICA—1908.

We come to thee, O Mother, unelate,
With eyes grown sightless and with hearts bowed
 down,
Weary of shadows and the tinselled crown
That lure thee to the noisome place where wait
Grim legions of despair whose cry is fate;
Thou hast forsaken the old altar stone
For barren fields where bitter buds are sown,
And strong men mourn for thee who once wast great.
O Mother whom we love, why dost thou keep
Such faith with liars and with things of blame?
Dost hear no little voice above the din?
The waters rise so slowly, but they creep
Until the tide shall quite engulf thy shame;
O Mother who wilt shield thee in thy sin?

FAITH.

After the night the dawn,
After the dusk the stars:
Sorrow will stay only a day,
God makes who never mars.
Love is the soul expressed,
Love is too deep for speech:
And the tender light of eyes too bright
For common words to reach
Shall lift my soul to heights
Ungessed by sober thought,
Where the lure of lies from alien skies
And misery are not;
But love's sweet note is heard,
Expectant, fond, divine,
And the spirit goes, like fading rose,
Beyond our curious eyne
To regions yet unknown
Where those whose hearts are pure
Shall feel the kiss of Him who is
Lord of what does endure.

TO M.

God made thee fair to men and unto me
Fair as a sudden glimpse of Paradise !
I ask no other boon than that mine eyes,
Grown reverent since they have had sight of thee,
Shall picture to my soul the memory
Of love made jubilant in glad surprise
That reaches over earth to those soft skies
Where love is lord through all eternity.
Yea, though I crawl with mien abashed and low
Through the familiar path of dross and stain,
And make obeisance to the gods men know
But dimly, or as dreams than life more vain,
When my soul lifts, from earth a thing apart,
I worship thee, a woman of pure heart.

THE FORGOTTEN.

They whom the gods forgot
In the tumult and stress of strife
Have come to the barren spot
That marked the beginning of life.
Empty of heart and hand,
As beggars they shrank from the door ;
But the gods who understand
Will give cheer when the struggle is o'er.
And the gods whose hearts are kind
As the restless sea is deep
Have care for the stricken blind
In the time between sleep and sleep.
The day with a shout lays bare
Wan frames for the world too weak,
And they shrink like a hind to its lair
Till night brings the peace they seek ;
For the day with a trumpet blast
Wakes memories better forgot,
Or lain in the dateless past
Where memory murmurs not ;
Where never a wind strips leaves
From a rose in the choking dust,

And never a blossom grieves
In the odor of damp and must;
Where regret is dead as desire
In the heart of the buried dead
That sleeps with the worm, its sire,
In a lone, forgotten bed.
The world was a monstrous dream
That smote as it lured them on
To the tideless, salt, dark stream
Where sunbeam and star never shone;
The world was a hideous thing,
A siren that lured to betray,
And they wept as they heard men sing
Who were crowned with the light of day.
They wept as a child might weep
In the darkness of sudden night:
As a child foredoomed to keep
Watch till the coming of light,
And the gods who had worlds to guide
Bruised with invisible feet
The hearts which they thrust aside
Like stones on a city street.
They of the world condemned
Are nameless and dateless in death,
And they sank in the stream, nor stemmed
For the space of a moment's breath
The cruel force of the wave,
The river's resistless might,
And cold in the gloom of the grave
They await the passing of night.
No voice from the wreck was heard
On the wind made sweet by June,
And never a blossom stirred
While Fate shrieked a mirthless tune.
They strove while they might to seize
The goblet a god held up,
But only the bitter lees
Were left in the shining cup;
And their lips were cracked with thirst,
And their souls with desire were seared,
But the gods who saw hearts burst
Forgot ere the dawn upreared
Its standard above the mist
Which shrouded the path they trod,
And their brows were never kissed

By light from the eyes of a god.
They walked with the shadow of want
Through a dolorous way to sleep,
And the sea made mournful chant
In resonant voice and deep.
They have gone through the valley dark
With a sob on their tuneless lips,
And never a stone shall mark
The place where they met eclipse.
They whom the gods forgot
Are housed in the house of death,
And no man remembers the spot
Where they gave up their feeble breath
In a struggle too great for men
Moulded from common clay,
But the gods have heed, and when
The night is pierced by a ray
More bright than Apollo's brows,
They shall wake to a vision fair
As the porch of the Master's house
With the God who remembers there.

ON READING HAECKEL.

Man is the creature of a baser birth
Than that he dreamed; his soul a figment, mind
Delusion, and he wanders in a blind,
Uncertain path across the careless earth,
Uncomraded by hope or faith or mirth,
To mix at last with matter where no wind
Murmurs above the lava, and the kind
Stars offend no more nor any sun is worth.
Thou knowest not, nor I, nor any man
Of all the millions who will go before,
Yielding unwillingly a little breath.
I have no knowledge of the mighty plan—
I await in darkness on a foreign shore,
The master of the unsolved riddle, Death.

TO BRAHMA.

If it please Brahma, when my soul takes on
Strange garments formed of perishable clay,
I would be as a carle upon the way
Of lowliness, with giant's might and brawn,
And keen delight in being. I have gone
So far from Nature that no little ray
Lights up this morgue of sorrow and dismay,
But round me dead men's bones make life forlorn.
Therefore, Creator, when thy breath shall fan
Th' imperishable spark into a flame,
Make me a humble thing, a lowly man
Of many millions, whose unhonored name
Brings with it neither hope nor grief nor ban,
Nor yet the pompous pride of dureful fame!

ON A MILITARY PARADE.

Aye, haste thee. Men crowned yonder fool with bay,
And men have set him in the market-place
So that the children shall have holiday
To catch reflected glory from his face,
While rises o'er the roofs the thunderous burst of
praise.

And wherefore come they forth? Yon hero smote
Dull, naked carles who struggled to be free:
And thou, my Country, with exulting throat,
Thou, who wert unto men a prophecy,
Hast lifted up a song upon a tideless sea.

We are no longer pure of heart; no more
The winds have melody, the stars have song;
The phantom bark puts in to crumbling shore,
And sweet, calm souls are flouted in the throng,
Held little worth as weeds the noxious weeds among.

Yet when the darkness shall enfold thee round
And eyes lack sight because of bitter tears,

When in thy senate halls the doom shall sound,
Mixed with the insults of rough musketeers,
Thinkst Minos will forget these boastful, braggart
cheers?

Would God the gangrened corpse had power to
move

A later sage to try the heights of truth!

Do nations need a sacrifice to prove

The sweets of conquests? Thou, we deemed, in
sooth,

Wert beautiful in all the majesty of youth.

But like thy darker sisters of the night,

Allured to paths beset with flames of hell,

Thou hast gone forth in sullen, ruthless might,

Unheedful of the blood-flecked waves which tell

How nations faltered, and how, unwept, nations fell.

Therefore, O Mother of a lofty race

Whom time remembers with enduring pride,

Put by the sword of conquest and retrace

The way that leads to altars beautified

By hopes of men who agonized for thee and died.

TO A CRITIC.

With neither rose nor lily shalt thou crown

Him who has dared a dark, tempestuous sea

In a weak shallop? Thinkst that unto me

No murmur of the melody floats down

From great Elizabeth; no echo blown

From Attic demes when the strong soul was free

As winds of Heaven, and in ecstasy

Shaped forth a sonnet in the lifeless stone?

Ah listen! Though I lack the easeful speech

Of him who saw the calm-browed, mighty gods,

I have had vision of a bleeding Christ.

So with a hope that conquers fear, I reach

Over the gulfs of hell and death's sharp rods

To the bright throne my own sweet God devised.

EXPECTATION.

My soul is a rose that is thirsting for light,
And thou art the sun in the sky ;
So long I have lain in the shadow I yearn
For the moment when thou wilt be nigh.
The winds of the evening have chilled me and pierced,
The night-worm beside me has lain ;
The serpent, close coiled, twined his length by my
side
And the city has left me its stain.
I know not the lore of the magians grave
Who mount to the footstool of God ;
I await in dumb longing the goddess who lifts
A faint bud from the unfeeling sod.

THE WAY.

Thou shalt not burden with a selfish prayer
The Spirit who created and will keep,
In turmoil of endeavor or calm sleep,
Each meanest creature in His sheltering care.
Be thou his regent and have strength to dare
Untrodden paths, nor cringe with those who creep
O'er the familiar way, nor fear to leap
Like a glad bird upon the fields of air.
Live for thy soul that so thy soul may be
Remembered as a flower when the snows
Rest heavy on lone graves and the sad sea
Murmurs its pain to the swift wind which blows
Over the easeless world ; then unto thee,
When fit, will God His sovereign Self disclose.

AMERICA, 1900.

Thou shalt hale the helpless captive to the prison
and the block,
Thou shalt chain the savage warrior to the ever-
during rock;
There his flesh shall bleach in sunshine, there his
bones shall bleach in storm,
And his life go out in darkness, leave him there to
beast and worm.
Thou shall fill the world with murmurs of an empire
built on sand,
And thy peoples shall go wailing through the deso-
lated land,
And thy children, like the raven, shalt seek out for-
gotten crumb,
Mirthless, cheerless, creeping lowly, in their anguish
brutelike, dumb.
Great thou wert, when speaking bravely, stalwart
men threw off the chains
Which a senile despot welded; thou wert great, and
those deep stains
On the snows of Valley Forge prove the heights the
soul achieves
When the deed is not unworthy of the truth the soul
conceives.
Noble wert thou, O my Country, and thy sons were
upright, pure,
And thy women sweet as lilies, to the poles of duty
sure.
Thou didst bleed at Saratoga, on the Hill thy blood
wast poured,
And thine armies still were faithful though the
haughty Lion roared.
When defeat hung darkly o'er thee, like a horrible,
thick mist,
And the traitor hugged the idol which his bloodless
lips had kissed,
And the world was filled with terror lest the height
should not be won,
Thou didst go thy way unblinded with the chieftain,
Washington.
Not the purple of the Cæsars nor the pride of lofty
throne,

'Neath whose lustre sink the millions, filling earth
with bitter moan,
Nor the clamorous cries of thousands who bowed
prostrate 'fore a king,
Lured him outward from the pathway where he
heard a siren sing.
Though the envious crowded closer to upbraid him
and oppress,
And the baser ones cried loudly or condemned with
stifled hiss,
O'er the perilous way he struggled, lofty, calm and
unafraid,
And Columbia took her station in bright-shining
robes arrayed.
They were men who wrought the fabric, they were
men who guided well,
And the partial goddess lingers o'er the syllables
which swell
Like an echo from Miletus where a beggar, blind,
once sung
Of strong-limbed and daring heroes when the world
and life were young.
By the God above who watcheth, he is great who
would be free
And his soul is strong in striving as the ever-restless
sea !
He has struggled to the station whence he scans with
clearest sight
The unreal bonds of slavery and equipage of might ;
He has flung behind the sceptre, he has flung behind
the rod,
And his soul is ever beautiful and worthy of its God ;
For the dust that makes the bondsman makes the
tyrant and the king,
And the monarch and the peasant sink beneath
Death's baleful sting.
Up the toilsome slope unwearied, like a giant after
sleep,
Ever hopeful, thou hast struggled to the fruits that
thou shalt reap :
And beside thee for a moment, worthy men have
clambered on,
And their eyes were bright with promise, for they
saw a better dawn.

Through the long, sad years of error when the South-
ron strove to bind
Chains more firmly on the bodies of his own poor
human kind,
When the cries of shrinking women filled the ever-
groaning land,
One arose to lead thee onward with a forceful, virile
hand.
Through the noisome wood of Furies, where a ser-
pent crossed his path,
And the trees dropped dews like poison, and the
very winds breathed death,
He moved forward, Duty called him, and the light
that shone afar
Urged him to that silent river, where no shouting
millions are.
O my Country, hast forgotten that sweet soul who
spoke to men
Like Timoleon arisen from his grave to be again
The loftiest height the soul may reach, the spirit of
our deeds,
The rose that cheers the wilderness when all things
else are weeds?
Nay! The heart has chambers which enfold all
beauty as a rose ;
There the thought erects an altar as a spotless maid-
en goes
Through the night in her own purity to some enhal-
lowed shrine,
And the soul becomes as Fancy wills, expectant,
sweet, divine.
He who moves along Life's highway backward looks
with eager eyes
To behold the pleasant places over which bend sun-
ny skies.
Once his hope went on before him to the fields his
feet should tread,
Where sweet music yearned forever and the rose
such odor shed
As made life a dream elysian, but a sinuous snake
crept in
And his Eden grew all-hateful, the abode of shame
and sin.
Yet his Paradise was beautiful : himself had changed,
had grown

Unworthy of its splendor; he had lost the subtle
tone
Which upraised him from his fleshliness to that se-
renest height
Where the soul sees in a vision God who moves in
robes of light.
So my country, thou art blinded: thou hast gazed
with daring eyes
On a harlot who allures thee from the path where
honor lies;
Thou hast launched a feeble shallop on a dangerous
sea and deep,
Dost thou think 'tis sunshine ever and the storm will
always sleep?
O, I loved thee as a matron who in sober weeds ar-
rayed,
Moved unheedful of the murmurs which her lighter
sisters made!
Thou wert unto me a vision of a woman who would
take
Rather death and all its terrors than a single heart
should ache.
But the tempter came and whispered, thou hast left
the arduous way,
And my heart is bowed in sorrow, evil night has fol-
lowed day.
Nought there is, 'fore Heaven, more loathly than a
woman old in crime,
Such thou art who hast sworn friendship with the
strumpet and the mime;
Yet the children turning sadly on the bed of pain
and woe
Shall assail thee with their curses, this I deem thou
canst forego.
In thy marts the Semite haggles, the Phœnician
sends thy ships
Over roaring seas to continents where men with
bloodless lips
Ply the trades the gods abhor; thou hast taken
price for flesh,
And thy children as thyself yet shall feel the biting
lash.
Men to thee are merely puppets; thou shalt move
them as befits,
For the lie thou callest destiny beside thee ever sits

And his soft syllabic taunt dares thee unto deeds of
 shame :
 Thou hast taken up the gage, thou art cursed with
 evil fame.
 Thou didst marshal many legions, and the boys of
 sunny Spain
 From the blooming vales of Castile, crossed an alien,
 parlous main
 That thy Philips might be lauded for their prowess
 on the field,
 And thy phalanx come back shouting, bearing many
 a hostile shield.
 Thou shalt write the names of heroes — such thou
 callest those who fought —
 On the walls of all thy temples in bright letters, but
 the thought,
 Still unsatisfied and sickened turns to lands across
 the sea
 Where thine armies smite barbarians who struggle to
 be free.
 Is it virtue to sit down and tell thy rosary o'er and
 o'er
 While the wave that whelms thine infant mounts
 above thy chamber door?
 Shalt thou seek a crowded altar, calling vainly on
 old gods,
 While the footmen of a tyrant scourge thy shoulders
 with their rods?
 Hast forgotten that a despot trembled, drooped at
 Marathon
 And the sun that marked his coming saw his armies
 spent and gone?
 So shalt thou, who from thy Susa sendest hosts to
 chain the free,
 Behold thy navies sink dismantled in a careless,
 blood-stained sea.
 For the same God judgeth kingdoms who looks into
 human souls,
 And his vengeance is as certain as the thunderous
 ocean rolls
 Shattered corpse of stricken savage where Manila
 lifts its spires,
 And the orient sun slides downward in a million
 gleaming fires.
 Liars flatter, liars soothe thee, thou hast heard the
 pleasing tale

And thy prophets are dishonored, for the just man
yawns the jail,
While the headsman and his doxy, on the awful bed
of state,
Sleep befuddled in their satins and thy mob believes
them great.
O thou Carthage of the occident, what Cato shall
decree
That thy peoples shall be scattered and thy temples
roofless be?
Thinkst that one man in his virtue may avert the
gathering storm?
Hear of Sodom and the Dead Lake, its foul waters
yet are warm.
Mighty Sybaris ranged its armies, rank and rank
upon the field,
Does relentless History questioned, but one grudging
echo yield?
O thou God who bringest just men to the place that
thou dost keep,
Who judgest all men truly, who will part the goats
and sheep;
Thou hast snatched men from perdition, thou hast
brought them to thy breast;
Heal the sickness of my Country which hath fallen
with the rest!
Not in vain the years roll onward, nations rise to
noble things,
And a lofty goddess proudly to the altar roses
brings,
For the gods have joy in justice, they take pride in
what removes
All unnatural hate of kindred, lust of power and
false loves.

CONSOLATION.

Shall I sit down in ashes and make moan
Because proud men were moved to pass me by
Unnoticed? No cold world shall hear me cry
In bitterness of spirit for the throne
Of foolish bards. My heart has wiser grown,
And in the winds my soul still finds reply,
And waves and buds and clouds that greet mine eye

With beauty which God gave me as my own.
Ere subtle death shall strike with venom'd dart,
Far from my baser self I have upclomb
To the sweet comrades of my yearning heart;
Dimly God's beauty I have understood,
And journeying as a wanderer to his home,
Borne slight, vague witness to th' eternal Mood.

AN APOLOGY.

I have so wrestled with a grimy fiend
That thought turns inward and seems little worth,
Or fellow of a thing of baser earth.
Yet in the darkness, daringly I leaned
Over the battlements of self that screened
Impulse and fancy, hope and love and mirth
From the bright chamber of their happy birth
Where fond ambition loftily once queen'd.
So in the light of understanding, raised
Out of myself by sense of burning song,
I seek the path of duty and good fame,
That though unknown of men, unmarked, unpraised,
I shall have Heaven's light, and like a strong
Disciple of sweet Christ elude hell's shame.

THE VISITOR.

Roared the Northwind through the valley,
Winter bleak had chained the streams,
And the Sun, departed, gladdened
Flowers no longer with his beams.

Lily pale and rose of passion,
Violet that hides afar
From the noises of the city,
Slept or dreamed where foul worms are.

Through the mists that rose up boldly
Trees looked gaunt and grim and bare;
Like the corpse of some sweet maiden
Who had once been passing fair.

Snows lay deep on hill and hollow,
And the neatherd, leading home
Flocks the piercing storm had scattered,
Found not path o'er which he'd come.

Rose the Moon behind the mountain
Like a world upbuilt anew,
And a star shone in the distance,
Dimly through the cope of blue.

Of a sudden clouds passed onward,
Moon and star were blotted out,
And the gusts brought tingling echoes
As of fiends' infernal rout.

Then a hush came as in dreaming ;
Silence brooded o'er the earth
Like a Spirit calmly waiting
Some new Era's golden birth.

On his throne the King sat proudly.
Bright the lights shone through the hall,
And the shadows, ever changing,
Grew to giants on the wall.

She was there, his Queen beside him,
Smiling sweetly in her pride ;
Beautiful as Spartan Helen
Who looked on while heroes died.

O the beauty of the maidens
Who were near the lofty throne !
Rose and lily blent in sweetness
Seemed visible, and goodness shone

In their eyes' mild light entrancing :
Music slumbered on their lips,
And their breath like Persian odors
Sweet as honey the bee sips.

Played the light on greave and corselet,
Rending sword for virile hands ;
Here were those who smote the Moslem
On the sanguine Asian sands.

Up the King rose in his manhood,
Golden goblet held on high,
Looking proudly on his warriors
Who drew to his presence nigh.

Phrygian music, 'mid the rafters,
Lingered as in deathless pain,
And a thousand voices chanted
Songs of glory, battle, gain.

Suddenly a little swallow
From the darkness straight outflew
And beside the Queen sat singing;
Silence settled o'er that crew.

Flowed his song like rill of summer
When the world with buds is bright;
Then amid the solemn stillness
Passed into the cheerless night.

Bloodless waxed the haughty monarch,
Trembled maids and warriors bold
As a child who sees a phantom
Rising upward from the mould.

“Who hath wit to rede, come forward,
Speak his truth withouten fear;
Let him tell me of the swallow,
I command it; let me hear.”

Out into the light a Palmer
Bent with many cares and eild,
Came so slowly, like a prophet
Who had seen the tomb unsealed

Wherein Nature hides her secrets
From the eager gaze of man,
And he grew, it seemed in glory,
As the good and noble can.

“Thou hast spoken, O thou monarch,
Lord of this all-pleasant land,
And thy peoples bow obedient
To the waving of thy hand.

"Thou hast conquered oft in battle
And the world rings with thy praise;
But thine eyes must close in darkness —
'Tis the ending of all plays.

"Thinkst thou never of that Acre
Which stern angels watch and till,
Where no flowers struggle upward
And the winds are ever still?

"Hast thou never seen the Reaper
Bending lowly in the field?
O the fairest blooms are stricken,
So to him thou yet must yield!

"Thou shalt tread the narrow pathway
Where a Spirit waits with knife;
Footing swiftly he shall strike thee —
Such the Bird and such is Life.

"Thou from out the darkness briefly
Flashest into sudden light,
And thou singest but a moment,
Then art swallowed in the Night."

Dead the lights lay in the palace,
Kings and nobles joy no more,
And the wind makes solemn harping,
Rushing inward through the door.

And the maidens are as lilies
Stricken by a blinding storm;
Overthrown with their bright mistress
To the lowliness of worm.

And the Palmer drew his garments
Closer round his wasted frame,
And went downward through the valley
Nor left token of his fame.

NIGHT.

I love the night and its mysterious ways,
Its mad wild bursts of revelry, and then
The silences that wake to life again
Thoughts laden with the joy of happy days
Which thrill the soul like songs of childish praise
Heard in the calmer time of being, when
The heart finds solace in the tongue or pen
Of poet, wandering o'er the world's dim maze.
The spirit of the night is unto me
Like the soul of a rose which God transfused
Into my soul and made me, who am used
To woe and things unlovely, as a peer
Of the immortals ; like a bark I veer,
Lapsing along to an untroubled sea.

INCAPABILITY.

God knows my soul has beauty, but my speech,
Ineloquent and harsh, brings not to light
The loveliness of being ; to no height
Such as of old a poet strove to reach
May I e'er mount. Like wreck upon a beach,
Cheerless and sad, and wrapped in starless night,
I sit beside the highway woe-bedight,
Nor taste the springs eternal. What skilled leach
Whose art transcends the meager strength of words,
Great souled and daring, lofty, calm of gaze,
Shall heal my hurt and lead me o'er the ways
That lie beneath the shadow of the swords !
Ah Rose, that strove to clasp a vagrant cloud,
Thou art at once perfection, grave and shroud !

TO ———

I am a sciolist when thou dost peer
 With great, grave eyes into the depths of sense
 And being. Cant and braggart insolence,
 And inutility and thoughts which veer
 From purpose to unpurpose, and the sneer
 Upon the thin lips of experience,
 Flee from thy sight as snows when the intense
 Sun of forgotten summers greets the year.
 Only my soul, which strayed o'er alien ways,
 Has need of thee; I would forget thee quite
 And in a druid wood a shrine upraise
 To whispered gods who vex the easeless night
 With dreams of beauty and expected bays,
 Wet with tears of poets shed in their delight.

TO ———

Never have I, at the portal,
 Met the god of subtle bow,
 Though I strive with hope immortal
 So to take him ere I go
 Down the dim, unlighted highway,
 Past the bounds of life and love,
 While the brightest stars o'er thy way
 To a dreamful measure move.

Never with the lips of maiden
 Has the truant spoke to me,
 And my heart is like a laden
 Sinking bark on storm-tost sea.
 Never from sweet eyes that brightened
 Days that else were dark with grief
 Flashed the glance which soothed and light
 ened
 Hopes that bourgeoned past belief.

If the Lesbian, chanting mournful
Ditties that expressed her pain,
Came to me, not I the scornful,
Heedless Phaon would disdain
So to yield a willing servant
To each whim that moved her heart,
But in chorus, joyful, fervent,
Celebrate her greater art.

Thou rememberest how a shepherd
Judged the rival heavenly queens,
While his thought flew swift as leopard
Over unforgotten scenes
To the Spartan monarch's dwelling
Where the white-browed maiden lay —
Who would not, for love of Helen,
Give such proper judgment, pray?

I have sought to bridge the distance
Intervening 'twixt the gods
And my lowly, poor existence
But they tore me as with rods.
Never more shall I, erst heedless,
Vex my soul with thoughts too hard;
Rather have I lost in needless
Search my spirit's best reward.

For a light was breathed upon me
When thine eyes first looked in mine,
And a loftier hope has won me
To attempt the heights divine.
So I come, a pupil wilful,
To be taught love's mystic lore,
And I dare, O teacher skilful,
Ask the meaning of "Adore"!

IN MAY.

Now that the gods have made the world anew
All that my spirit craves is You,
Whom th' Immortals robed in garments of such woof
As keep the baser flesh aloof
From the pure fire which makes a woman fine,
And crowned with spiritual sign.

Years slip away as water in the rill,
Hurried afar by mighty Will;
And the same God who set the stars on high
Breathed beauty on thee, so that I,
Catching the murmur of an old sweet chant,
Should rise above the slough of want.

Only the gods have speech which may express
The yearning soul's deep loveliness,
Yet when dim space is sundered and the light
Streams from some lofty mountain height,
We in the valley, heavy in despair,
Lift a slight song upon the air.

Beauty had never its interpreter
Save when the nodding flowers stir
Bees into madness and the fields are rife
With murmurs of another life
That mocks the hopes of men who strive to pierce
With sightless eyes the universe.

Beauty is good, and calmly in the light
My soul sits down until the night
Shall strike with mortal cold, and in the gloom
I leave this bare and narrow room
For a far country, where among the sweet,
Thou shalt be first to smile and greet.

A LOVER'S SONG.

When your lips meet mine
Time with Space is flying;
When your soul greets mine
Worlds with Death are dying;
Half the madness of my thirst is unexpressed,
Half the sadness of my heart remains unguessed,
Half the gladness of my love is unconfessed,
When your lips meet mine.

When your eyes quench mine
Fame lies dead before me;
And your thoughts blanch mine
Like a star mist o'er me;
The existence of my soul becomes a dream,
Whence from distance far beyond, there seems
to stream
O'er the mistiness of life Love's hallowed beam,
When your eyes quench mine.

There is pathos at the parting of the ways,
There is death in parting tears;
All my life, reverted, strains its deathless gaze
Over unforgetful years.

What is sin when thou art near?
Truth if need be, thou art dear.
Fame is passion, love is truth,
Beauty, innocence and youth.
'Tis a hunger of the soul
Which has slipped beyond control:
'Tis a song without a form,
'Tis a bird within a storm,
'Tis the voice of God which sweeps
Over souls to their eclipse.

There are roses which bloom and die
And the world gleans never a scent
From their broken hearts ere the day is done,
And their life and beauty are spent.
There are souls which have flamed through a hell
To a shrine at a woman's feet,
Seared by the fire of passionate love —
O Love, is my song complete?

THE REPUBLIC.

A voice from a desolate Eden,
A shadow of shame by the way ;
God-forsaken, unkempt and dejected,
A curse in the fair light of day.
White lips that are sweet with strange music,
Eyes closed to the passing of truth,
And a soul that is flaming with fire
Which blasted the flower of youth.

She was robed like a thing of desire
In garments of insolent pride ;
She walked the dark way of the liar,
A perjured and pitiful bride.
She was naked to all who had vision,
Leprous, despised and unclean,
And God saw her slink from the pathway
To byways where wretches have been.

Ho, mourners, the candles are lighted,
And the corpse in the coffin is laid ;
Not a word in the silence, no murmur,
Great God, is the deep grave made !
Yet a moment ! The streets are ringing
With a multitudinous tread,
And her peoples are blithely singing
While here the Republic lies dead.



MAR 11 1939



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